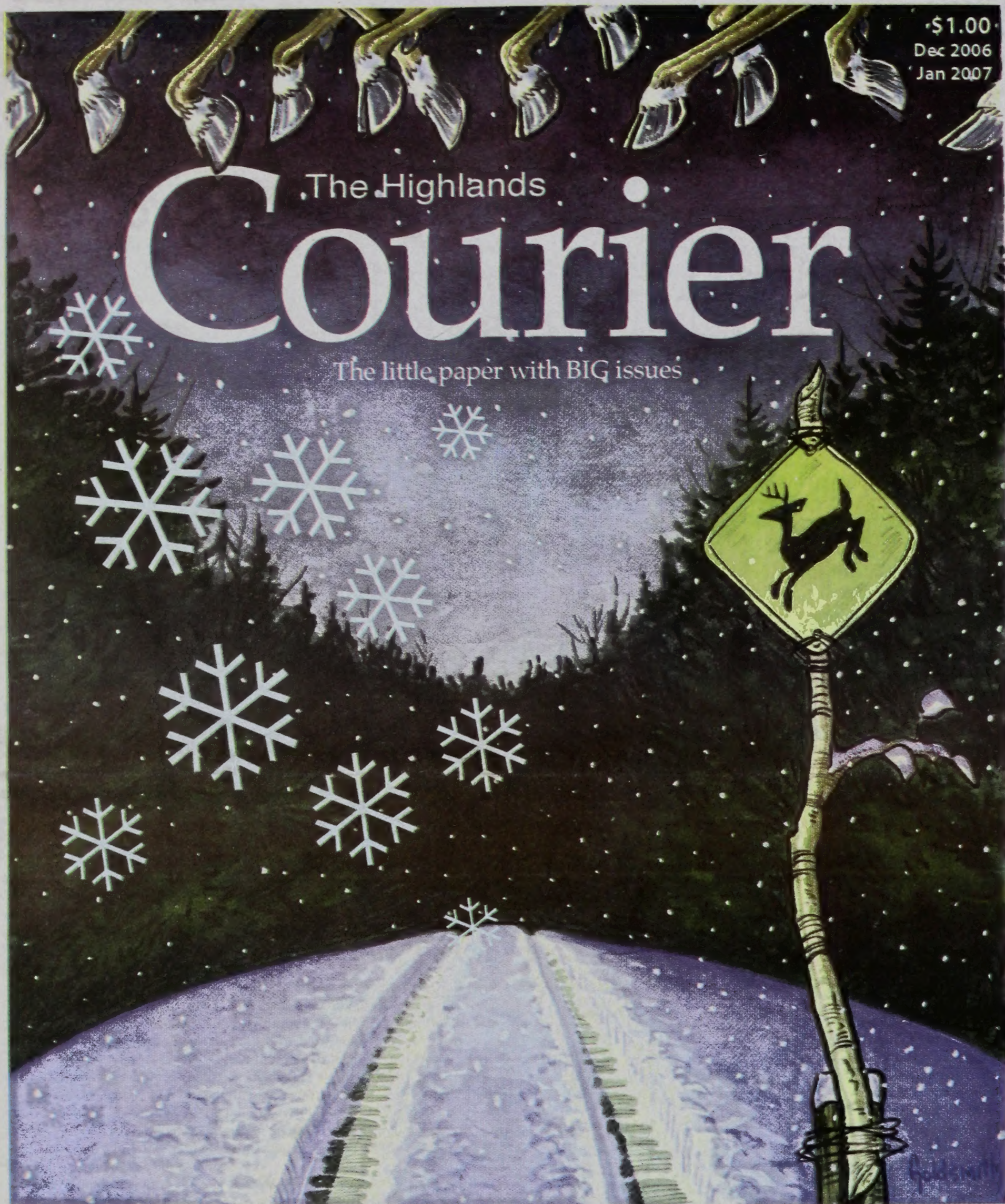


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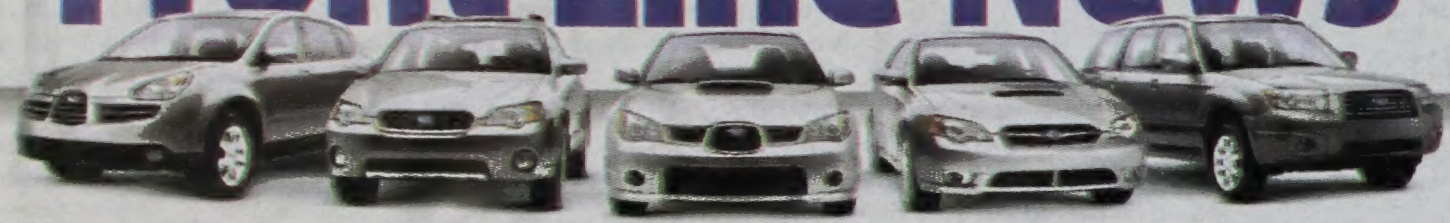
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The Long and Glamorous Road to Highland Grove



By Steve Galea

Patricia Huddart has led a contented life in Highland Grove for the last seven and a half years. She keeps and boards horses, raises a German shepherd, and runs a small catering business. She's quiet, private, and remarkably unassuming. She's not looking for attention or glamour. She's already had more than her fair share.

In fact, in what might be the understatement of the year, she grudgingly admits that she has led an "interesting" life. That's assuming that interesting describes borrowing a pick up truck from Clint Eastwood, sharing a birthday cake with Cary Grant, and hanging out with the likes of Tom Selleck, Lyle Wagener, and James Brolin. Otherwise, extraordinary or fantastic might be a far more appropriate word.

Things got exciting for the Montreal native during the sixties. That's when a high-school yearbook photographer suggested that she consider modeling.

"Of course, I was curious about the idea but my mother was an academic and she wasn't exactly for it. But after a while I convinced her to take me to an agency."

It turns out that photographer had a good eye for beauty. Before long modeling jobs were getting in the way of her university courses until, as she puts it, "Suddenly, I was flying to Paris."

Rest assured, that the French Capital wasn't her only stop. New York, London, Rome, and Sweden, were just some of the places modeling took her to.

"I traveled from the Arctic to Mexico."

By the time she returned home to Montreal, she was getting regular work in television commercials and even co-hosted a local game show called "Dollars and Cents."

"At about that time, a friend, who was an interviewer and weathergirl, moved to Los Angeles. And soon after she invited me to come out there and stay for a couple of months."

One day, she says, "We were at a restaurant frequented by well-known people when this gentleman approached me and asked if I was an actress. I thought it was a pick up line so I was borderline rude to him. But then he gave me his card and told me to contact his casting director and I began to think that this might be legitimate."

The gentleman, she says, turned out to be none other than Aaron Spelling, the now famous and recently deceased television producer.

Soon after, she was a contestant on the Dating Game, one of that era's most popular shows.

Around the same time, she was one

of twelve aspiring actors signed to a 7-year contract with 20th Century Fox. "It was based on the old star system. We were given acting classes every day, taught dance, movement, and anything else they considered important. It wasn't great money but it paid the bills."

Unfortunately, the studio disbanded the project less than two years later. But several of her classmates went on to stardom. They are the previously mentioned Tom Selleck, Lyle Wagener, James Brolin, and Lina Dano who became a superstar in the world of soaps.

"I remember when Lyle Wagener got his break on the Carol Burnett Show. He was incredibly excited."

In 1967, Patricia's career moved forward with a role in a short-lived comedy sitcom called Rango, which starred Tim Conway. "I played the part of a young lady who was constantly being pursued by a married man."

She also had speaking parts in episodes of The Monkees, The Man from U.N.C.L.E., and Run for your life, which featured Ben Gazzara.

About that time, she also had a minor speaking role in a Clint Eastwood movie, which she declines to name. She says, "He was a very, very nice man."

Her most cherished encounter of those days was a meeting with the legendary Groucho Marx.

"I was living in an apartment complex where Groucho's daughter, Melinda Marx lived. She was an actress and we became friends. One day, there was a knock on my door and when I answered there was Melinda and Groucho standing there. I was shocked. I mean here was a true legend standing right in front of me. I never did one intelligent thing. I couldn't even talk. Of course, he played it up and did that cigar thing, raised his eyebrows, told jokes, and all of that stuff."

Later, I was invited to Melinda's wedding and I practiced so I could say something to him. "When we met in the reception line, I said, 'How do you do Mr. Marx?' He remembered me and said, 'Oh, and she talks too!' He was a charming man."

It was at that same wedding that she met another screen legend, Gregory Peck, who was Melinda's godfather.

As if these brushes with greatness were not enough, she tells of the time when she was going out with Paul Peterson, a former child star who





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played the son on the Donna Reed show.

"We went to this restaurant and it was divided by booths. Suddenly the staff brought out this birthday cake and began singing happy birthday. We sang along, but more as a joke, but when we got to the table we found out that it was occupied by Cary Grant and his guests. Coincidentally, when Paul was a child, he had appeared in "The Houseboat" which Mr. Grant starred in. He remembered Paul, so he talked to us and even offered us some of his cake. When he left, I'll never forget that he said goodbye to all six people in our party and remembered each of our names and thanked us for singing."

Unfortunately, not all her memories are good ones.

"I also knew Sharon Tate. She was a sweet and natural person. We were both up for a part in Valley of the Dolls. Of course, she got it."

"One day she invited me to lunch. Unfortunately, I couldn't make it for some reason or another. She was killed (by the Manson family) the very next day. When Sharon was killed, that was the last straw for me. I left Los Angeles shortly after and resumed modeling in Montreal until my early thirties. I appeared in a couple of National Film Board of Canada movies too and I met my husband through a mutual friend."

She stopped modeling at thirty-five but got back into the profession for a while after she turned 50, doing still shots for Canadian Living magazine.

Though she went further than most people ever do in a very competitive profession, she says she never really had the drive required to make it in Hollywood.

"I just fell into it. It wasn't the be-all and end-all of my life. I never really fit in L.A. The people that succeeded there desperately wanted it. That wasn't me."

She says that part of her life was long ago and far away. "I'm not sorry I did it. But I don't regret leaving it either. I've got quite a scrap book."



Even so, she's been reluctant to publicize that part of her life. She says, she didn't want people to think she was trying to say that she was anything special. It took three months, in fact, for us to convince her to let us tell her "interesting" story.

Then again, I guess that only makes me appreciate the words of Groucho Marx all the more. You know, when he looked at Pat and said, "Oh, and she talks too!"

If you ask me, it's about time. Thanks Pat.

by Steve Galea

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Power of Persistence *pays*

By Jerry Grozelle

It all started when Bob Edmonds handed over his ticket to see if he had won anything. Although the lottery terminal played a winning tune, the amount he was told he had won was not the \$250,000 he later discovered the ticket was actually worth.

Bob Edmonds has become a celebrity after the CBC's *Fifth Estate* aired a documentary about his fight to recover a quarter million dollar Encore win from an Ontario Lottery Corporation ticket that was cashed in at an outlet in Coboconk in July of 2001.

The former owners of the convenience store where he took the ticket were charged and the long-time Coboconk resident endured a five-year court battle before receiving a settlement. *The Fifth Estate* show detailed his trials and tribulations over the course of the five-year struggle.

After the documentary aired, Bob Edmonds, who will celebrate his 84th birthday on January 3, 2007, received a flood of cards and letters - about a hundred over the first few weeks and he's still getting them.

'Some of them just wanted to congratulate me for having the staying power,' he said. Others wished him and his family well. 'I got nothing but positive letters - nothing negative; not one single negative letter.' Letters came from across the country - Newfoundland to British Columbia.

He also got several phone calls, from as far as British Columbia. He said the letters and calls

came from - beyond the borders of Ontario. 'It's a nice feeling. I enjoy the notoriety but not as much as I enjoy the feeling I get from the people and their wishes. I really like it.'

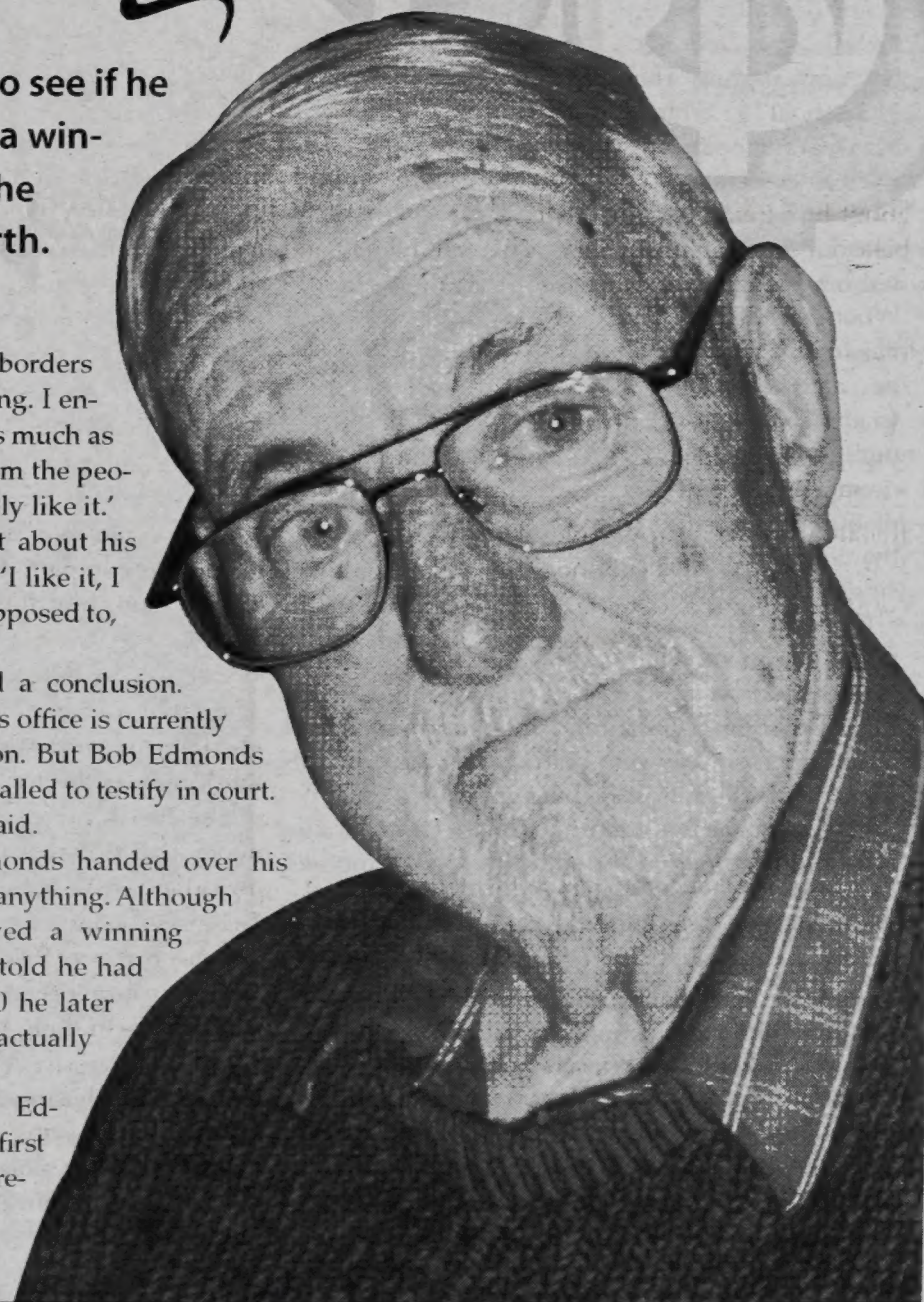
When asked how he felt about his celebrity status, Bob said, 'I like it, I enjoy it. I guess I'm not supposed to, but, hell, I do enjoy it.'

The story hasn't reached a conclusion. The Ontario Ombudsman's office is currently conducting an investigation. But Bob Edmonds doesn't believe he will be called to testify in court. 'But you never know,' he said.

It all started when Edmonds handed over his ticket to see if he had won anything. Although the lottery terminal played a winning tune, the amount he was told he had won was not the \$250,000 he later discovered the ticket was actually worth.

'It's called carelessness,' Edmonds said, 'and I'm the first one to admit that I was careless. I trusted people.'

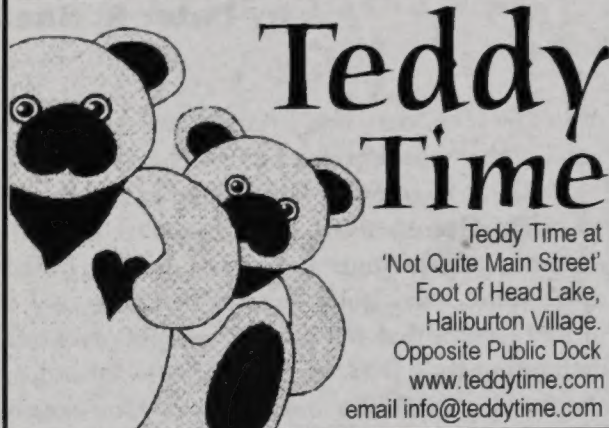
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The former owners of the convenience store where he took the ticket were charged and the long-time Coboconk resident endured a five-year court battle before receiving a settlement.

Edmonds says he still believes he can trust people.

Edmonds says he's very happy with the outcome of the court battle. He thinks the publicity of his case will prevent a lot of people from suffering the same fate.

'There was a director of the CBC who made the remark that he hopes that this will be used by lawyers people in the court system in the future,' he said.

Edmonds said his family had mixed feelings about him going to court to try and get what he believed was rightfully his. 'The family had a rough time handling it. It's not that they didn't believe me entirely, but they didn't think it was worth all this trouble. It affected their nerves. It got on their nerves,' he said.

But through it all, Bob's wife of 49 years (they will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on July 25, 2007), sons Bob Jr., and Donald and daughter Renate were very supportive. 'They were a great help,' he said. 'Especially near the end when the court cases were held in the Superior Court of Ontario in Toronto. I would have had a rough time handling the driving and staying overnight and parking. They did it all for me.'

Bob gives credit to Constable Allen Lee of the OPP for helping to uncover evidence and finding the right way to present it in court. He was persistent - he wouldn't let go.'

'I would like to let the people of the City of Kawartha Lakes know I appreciate their wishes; I really do,' he said. 'I owe them. There's no way I could do anything wrong because I'd be letting them down.'

Bob still buys lottery tickets and he says he always will. 'I got a card from a woman in Trenton, Ontario and this woman was telling me that she appreciated very much hearing about my case and that she just buried her father who was 86 years old. He had a habit when her mother and her went shopping he would reach into his wallet

- I can just see the picture - and give her a coin and say 'get me a 6-49' - right up to the end. When I read the card, I thought, that's me,' he said with a chuckle.

During most of the time the case was in progress, Edmonds says he was under a gag order. He couldn't talk about it until after the last day in court, which was St. Patrick's Day of 2005.

'Once again, I think I have to thank the Ontario Provincial Police and definitely the Ontario Lottery Corporation,' he said. 'They had the confidentiality clause released and I could talk.'

He said people had threatened to sue him prior to the gag order being lifted.

Bob and Theresa and their family have lived in Coboconk since 1978 and before that in Norland for a couple of years. The story behind their coming to this area is an interesting one.

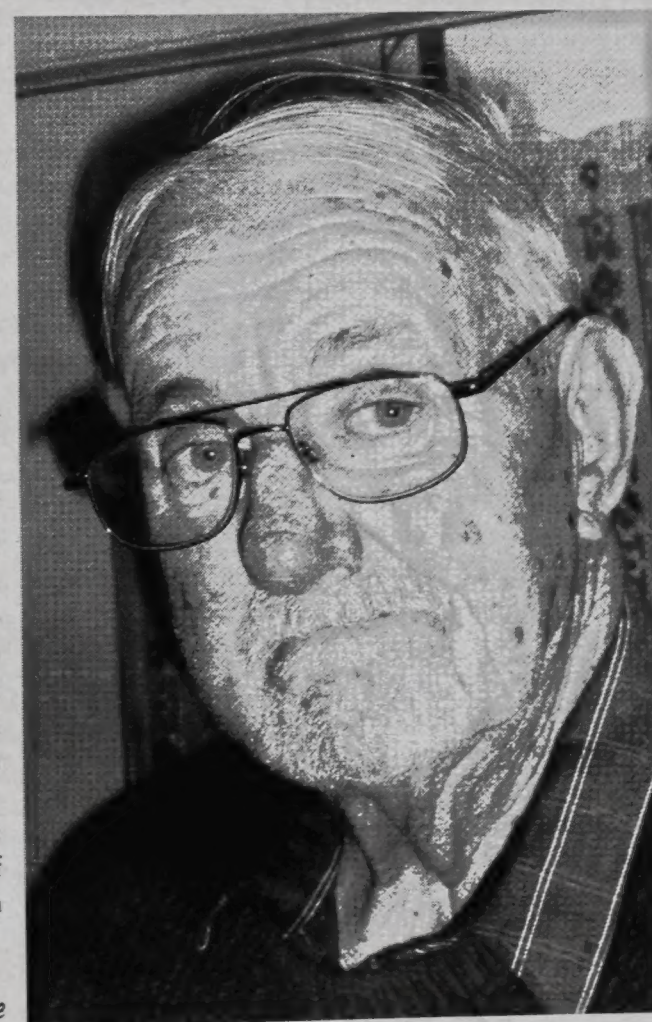
It started in 1960 when Bob participated in a geography contest sponsored by Liquid Flame, an oil and gas company based in Toronto. The final 10 contestants met at the Park Plaza Hotel for the final exam to determine the winner. 'I was lucky enough to win' Bob said.

The prize was an all expenses paid trip to anywhere in the world. Theresa was pregnant with Bob Junior at the time, so the Edmonds' opted to take a cash prize instead of the trip. With the money, they bought a cottage on Head Lake (west of Norland). 'We fell in love with the area.'

Bob was working for Ontario Hydro at the time (he's been retired for 25 years) and for the last two years he worked in Toronto, he commuted back and forth daily to the Ontario Hydro head office on University Avenue.

Summing up his experience, Bob Edmonds said: 'It's awful interesting how it's turned out. One of the thoughts you have to have is - I'm a lucky son of a gun.'

by Jerry Grozelle



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Burning down the stable: Having a hot time at Christmas

by Peter R. Snell

Q uick, who is the saint of brewers, tailors and file cutters? Uh - too slow - it is (of course, how could you forget) St Boniface.

Yes, it's the Christmas season once more, and I wouldn't feel right if I didn't add a few tall tales to the Christmas lore.

St. Boniface (real name: Winfrid) is credited with giving the coniferous tree some significance at Christmas. In 1723, the English-born catholic priest with a Germanic background chopped down the oak of Thor near Frizlar in present-day Germany. Winfrid wanted to convince the heathens in the area that the oak was not sacred and indeed a fine tree to begin the building of a church. When the huge oak toppled, it crushed all around it, except for a little fir sapling. Some devout Catholics, anxious to see a miracle in every chance happening, saw the tree as representing the tree of Christ that survives while all around withers. After this, Christian Germans apparently planted firs to celebrate Christmas.

In 1754, some non-Christians killed Winfrid because he had a habit of destroying their shrines. Winfrid was over 80 at the time, so he got to destroy quite a few shrines before they did him in.

Other legends credit the first Christmas tree to Martin Luther, who tried to recreate the starry skies with a few candles on a tree. As the custom spread, some killjoys had reservations. Puritans looked down on the tradition because it was too much fun. Oliver Cromwell thought Christmas trees were a heathen desecration that robbed Christmas of its sacredness. Today as corporations from Wal-Mart to Disney use the tree to flog their wares, he may have had a point. It's an interesting symbol, stuck halfway between representations of nature, earth and spirit and Santa Claus and presents. Most advertisers are not yet bold enough to take over more religious symbols: crosses, images of Jesus and so on are not customarily used to sell toys to kids, snowmobiles to dads or jewellery to mums.

Some say that Adam took a twig from the Tree of Knowledge and that was the start of the Christmas tree custom. But I can't think that God would think much of that, considering that He initially banned Adam from messing with that tree. Unfortunately, as the story goes, in an unguarded

moment He also gave humanity free will.

Santa too has had a varied career. Sixteenth-century British Protestants banned him, the Dutch nurtured him as the protector of sailors (he was often carved into the prows of ships) and the Americans fattened him. One source I checked confirmed that Santa lived at the North Pole "around some of the most beautiful scenery in the world." I guess that's subjective: if you like white, (with, as the same source indicated, the occasional polar bear "hanging out" near Santa's take-off site) you're in Nirvana. For the rest of us, we wonder why Santa didn't choose Jamaica for his workshop. Alternatively, if he likes a bit of cold, he could set up in Hastings County, where non-union labour is relatively cheap. For that matter he could choose China, where labour is dirt cheap.

Here are a few interesting legends that sprang from the stable in Bethlehem. A robin noticed the fire Mary and Joseph had started to keep the stable warm, was dieing. The robin went down, fanned the fire with its wings and got a red breast for having - wait for it, it's not for second-degree burns - such a warm heart. But this is the first I heard that Jo and Mary had a fire in the stable. With all that straw? Not a story you want to pass on to young children.

Meanwhile a little shepherdess, crying beside Jesus' manger because she had nothing to give him, was amazed to see white roses springing from her teardrops. Jesus touched the roses and the tips turned a beautiful pink: the Christmas rose. The shepherdess cut them immediately and presented them to Jesus. She undoubtedly left a few to grow for future generations as well, making it awkward for Mary with her long tresses to get to the manger without a few scratches.

Here's how the lamb got its wooly coat. A lamb named Baba (no, no, not Babar, that's the French elephant that lived with an old lady, ate cakes and rode a bicycle; that's a real story, I believe) saw that Jesus was a bit cold lying in the straw near a crazy robin who was fanning a fire. Baba, bravely ignoring a bunch of thorny roses, lay down with Jesus to keep him warm. Jesus, waking, touched him and his dirty rough coat turned soft and wooly. Mary had some sanitation concerns, but hypothermia is serious, so in the long run the lamb did the right thing. Jesus, by these accounts (and they're all from respectful, devout sources), seems to be something of a magician; too bad he

didn't fix it so Mary and Jo could have stayed at a hotel with running water and a Jacuzzi.

There's evidence that it might have been a bit chilly if Jesus was born on December 25, so the fire in the stable might have been needed. In fact, some sources say it's so cold at that time of year in Bethlehem, that it's unlikely shepherds would be tending their flock by night; the flocks and the shepherds would be under cover. One source, anxious to debunk December 25 as Jesus' birthday, say meteorologists have determined it's an average of 2.8 degrees Fahrenheit in December, 1.6 degrees in January and 0.1 in February. So, Jesus was born before the frost set in, from these folks' point of view, sometime in September. The December date was decided upon a few hundred years after Jesus' birth. It replaced a day when citizens did a bit of sun worshiping. According to this theory (with some fair heavyweights in the history department backing it), pagan worship was integrated into the Christian faith, rather than stomped out, St. Boniface notwithstanding. The Christmas tree custom, too, could be nothing more than a pagan rite; the decorations of shiny balls were symbols of the sun.

One source, after endless listing of various events and evidence to make the case, states baldly, "Christmas is pagan. There is no doubt about it. The question is: What are you going to do about it?"

Well, I have to say, these folks are killjoys. I'm pretty sure I'm going to do nothing about it, short of checking out those Christian and pagan rites that suit my lifestyle. By and large I like the Christmas festivities. Christian or pagan, Jewish or Muslim, Christmas seems to me to be a fine time for us to get together and celebrate in whatever manner we choose. However we interpret spirituality, it might also be a time to leave the lights of the mall behind us, decorate a few Christmas trees, take a look at the beautiful skies that can appear at this time of year and hoist a drink (beer, mulled cider, tea, your choice) with family friends and neighbours.

In that spirit, I hope all Highlands Courier readers, their family and friends have a fine holiday season. May St. Boniface protect all brewers, especially at this time of year.

Merry Christmas!

by Peter R. Snell

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Couldn't have said it better

by Jerry Grozelle

Trust

During the Christmas season we tend to think of the positive side of people - the giving, the sharing and the other good things that go along with this time of year.

The story in this issue about Bob Edmonds and his experience of dealing of with someone else's willingness to take advantage of a situation purely out of greed shows us that there is a need to be cautious. Sometimes our trust in other people can override our vigilant instincts, which is exactly what the opportunistic predators among us are looking for.

The vast majority of us are decent, honest and caring people with a conscience. But there are a few who lack some, or all, of those qualities and, unfortunately, it's difficult to tell them from the upstanding citizens - until their true colours shine through (if they ever do).

The holiday season is when those predators are in their element. Most of us are concentrating on the niceties of the season and our guard is lowered in the belief that everybody is in the same frame of mind and that goodwill and charity will prevail.

It's a safe bet that some among us will feel the bite of someone else's greed over the Christmas season. We can only hope that the loss is minimal and bearable. We can also hope that the victims learn from the experience and don't abandon the notion that it's only a very few individuals that we have to be wary of.

After a five-year battle to claim what was rightfully his, you would think Bob Edmonds would be bitter, cynical and suspicious of his fellow human beings. Few of us would blame him if he was. If anybody has the right to be distrustful it would be Bob.

But he isn't.

It's not that he hasn't learned from the experience - he certainly has. But he seems to have retained a basic trust in people in spite of what he and his family went through.

We could all take a lesson or two from Bob. He's seen the dark side of people and he's seen how difficult it can be to fight for what's yours. And after all that, he looks at the experience with a positive attitude. The good that came of it, for Bob, outweighs the bad. And he's a better person because of it.

Here's hoping all The Highlands Courier readers have a wonderful, safe holiday season and a prosperous, healthy 2007.

Jerry Grozelle

'It's awful interesting how it's turned out. One of the thoughts you have to have is - I'm a lucky son of a gun.'

Bob Edmonds

Coboconk, 2006

Summing up his experience. See story page 4 and 5

Get an opinion

by Dan the City Guy

New buzz

Let's file a lawsuit! Hmmm, let me think? Where should we start? How about the Government? They always have lots of money to pass around. And there are so many levels to choose from. We can start with City Hall and work our way up to the Federal Government. All it takes is a half-decent, but not necessarily ethical, lawyer and a perceived injustice and then sit back and wait for the money truck to arrive.

Lawsuits have become the norm in society these days, especially in North America.

If the coffee is too hot, sue McDonalds. If you get too fat, sue Wendy's. If you have a cough, sue the tobacco companies.

But now it borders on ridiculous. Recently, an Ontario Court of appeal tossed out a \$75 million lawsuit brought by victims of West Nile virus. No one is saying this is not a serious disease and I feel for all those that contracted it. But can we really expect the Government to be at fault. There has been mass advertising campaigns alerting the public to the dangers of West Nile and how to take precautions against it. But I guess to some in society the government has to be even more pro-active. Perhaps every time I book my summer vacation at the cottage I should demand a government employee sit beside me at the campfire to swat the mosquitoes. I don't mind sharing my marshmallows with the guy, but I don't want my taxes to go through the roof because of it. And where does it end? Will that same government employee check that the hook on my fishing line is not too pointy so that the hook does not take out someone's eye? Or have a stink-o-meter to measure the stench in the local outhouse for dangerous toxic emissions? I smell a huge lawsuit there.

But the Government must bear part of the blame too. Although well-intentioned, or rather self-preserving, they have tried to adopt laws to protect us from the evils of society. In Ontario, we have had a ban on pit-bulls, but not on bad owners.

McGuinty even tried banning sushi, although nobody was falling ill from eating it.

Personally, it makes me gag just thinking of eating raw fish, but I find it more distasteful someone trying to ban me from eating it. So we will go on banning trans-fat from food, pop from schools, and smoking indoors. But I don't think bans are only to protect us from harm. I think governments are trying to prevent future lawsuits against them. But this has had the reverse effect. It has created a culture of entitlement and expectation. We feel entitled to have the government take care of us from cradle to grave. We expect them to prevent all injuries and health hazards.

We have forgone the part of our brain that stimulates reasoning and common sense.

It is no longer our responsibility but their responsibility. When was the last time you heard someone say "it was my fault and I take full responsibility."

The main problem is that even if these lawsuits get thrown out against the government, it still costs us, as in you the taxpayer, millions of dollars to defend these mainly frivolous cases in the courts. They can drag on for years with endless appeals. This money can be used for health care and preventive measures, or to find a cure for the very thing being sued for in the first place.

So do not sue this newspaper you're reading because the government did not force the publisher to use special ink. Instead, just wash your hands of all this litigation stuff.

Danny Andru
Dan The City Guy

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from all of us at The Highlands Courier!*

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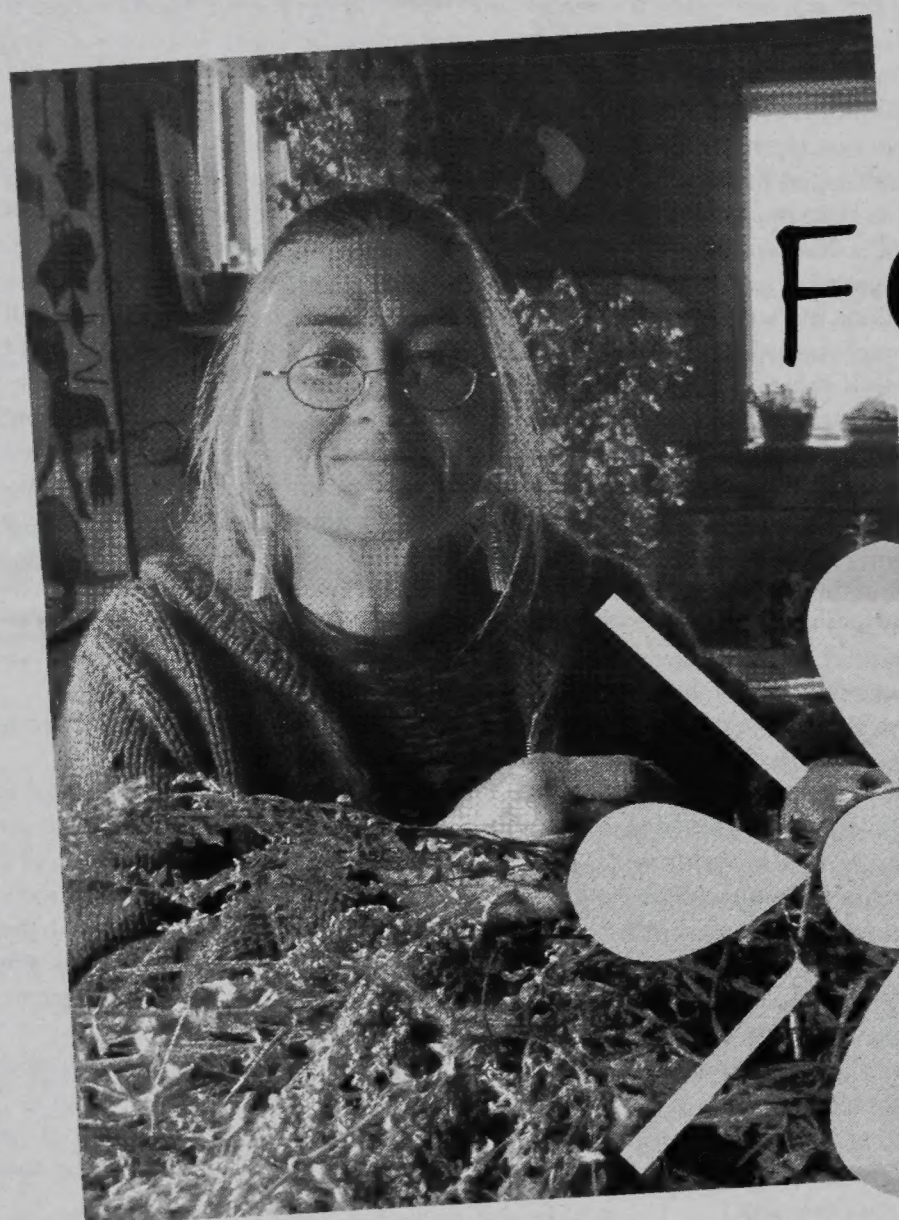
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MAGICAL FOOTPRINTS

WHETHER SHE IS HARVESTING, PREPARING, DRYING OR PUTTING THEM INTO TINCTURES, CREAMS, SALADS OR TEAS, DIANA IS EVER AWARE OF EACH PLANT'S PRECIOUS LIFE, OF ITS SPIRIT BEING OFFERED FOR HER USE. SHE HARVESTS WITH GREAT CARE, TAKING ONLY WHAT SHE NEEDS, MAKING SURE THE PLANT WILL CONTINUE TO FLOURISH. SHE MAKES SURE NOT TO TAKE THE WHOLE PLANT UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, IN WHICH CASE SHE MAKES CERTAIN THERE ARE MORE PLANTS IN THE AREA FOR THE FUTURE.

There was a time, before there was such a thing as a licensed doctor, when each community had its wise woman. This person walked the wild places, patiently studying, tasting, testing the plants and gleaned their uses. What she learned was passed down from mother to daughter, woman to woman. People came to her for cures for sickness or injury, even depression and dementia. She attended births, deaths and everything in between, and so was an integral part of a strong community. Where is she now?

As I bump along down the narrow lane through the woods, (slowly- my car doesn't have much clearance), I feel time warp: this could be a hundred years ago. There are no Hydro lines here. I pass old farm buildings and rustic homes at the edges of the wild places. Clearings hold rich gardens laid to rest for the winter and an orchard gone bare in the cold wet November wind. This is going to be a

special morning. We are going to visit my friend Diana MacAuley. Her home is on a grassy hill, backed by meadows and copses of trees, with lush vegetable and herb gardens that look half wild in their enthusiasm. The damp chill chases me inside: such a pleasure to come indoors and let the woodstove and a cup of tea warm my bones. This is a place of gleaming wood, comfortable cats and welcoming chairs; a handbuilt home full of big southern windows giving lots of light and providing a home to many plants of every shape and size, even a fig plant quite happily giving fruit. Beyond the round clawfoot table I see a hammock slung in the corner, and original artwork everywhere. This is a place of gathering over shared food and laughter, of learning, of resting. Diana and I settle in for a good chat. Born on a farm in southwestern Ontario, Diana remembers her grandmother, a nurse, making

poultices and using herbs, but her mother, also a nurse, had a real prejudice against those "old fashioned ways". Diana had to learn on her own. She completed teachers college in the late 60's and took her first job in Nova Scotia. There she began a lifelong love affair with nature. She shared a farmhouse with people who were artistic, musical and part of the "Back to the Land" movement of the time. This was homesteading: very different from the family farm where she was raised. Here the focus was not on profit or maximizing returns from the land. Rather it was on sustainability and getting in touch with the rhythms of nature. It was about working the land to provide food for the household, selling, trading or sharing the surplus with others. Diana learned about canning vegetables and grinding her own grain (much more nutritious, and you rarely need leavening to make bread with fresh flour). She learned about environmental issues, and



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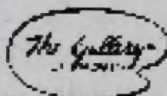
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her
world
was
enriched and
expanded. She fell in
love with the vibe around
this way of life, these beautiful,
courageous and creative people.

When she had her babies, Diana felt
impelled to find out about natural foods and
herbs as medicines in order to avoid chemicals.
Her son Nicholas has special needs and grew up
with seizures from the age of 3. This only added
to Diana's drive to learn about natural medicine
ways. A naturopath introduced her to supplements
and dietary nutrition as well as Rescue Remedy,
one of the Bach Flower Remedies. (Watch for an
upcoming article all about this amazing system.)
Now here we are in warm kitchen on Morning
Glory farm nestled in the hills between Wilno and
Killaloe, not far from HWY 60. Diana has been
here for 16 yrs, drawn once more by the beauty of
living on the land and among those who hold this
natural way of life to be precious and sacred.

"I can't remember when I first stuffed a jar full of
herbs and added alcohol to make a tincture."

She recalls an early teacher: a man named "Brother
John" who visited the farm years ago. He was
strangely beautiful, with henna-red hair and
very black eyebrows, and a surprisingly sculpted
physique considering his advanced age. Brother
John knew a lot about herbal medicine and health,
and had made it his mission to teach the hippies in
Ontario how to live on the land. He was a difficult
man, aggressive in his approach sometimes, and
many folks stayed away from him. But Diana
pestered him and teased him until he taught her to
make her first tincture.

"It was so simple; once I saw how simple it was it
took the mystery right out of it..."

Diana calls it Wildcrafting and Earth Medicine;
the gathering and preparing of wild food and
medicines. She grows or gathers almost everything
she needs, and her family has always been able
to heal themselves with these medicines. Her
daughter even traveled home from Toronto
recently because she needed some relief from a
serious cold and she wanted her mother's special
tinctures and teas.

The tea in my cup this
morning is a mixture of
lemon balm, catnip and horsetail
gathered in the area. It smells and tastes
sweetish, bitter, and somehow nourishing,
as though my body is happy I am drinking it.

When she has a day off from being a supply teacher,
Diana can spend the whole of it wandering the
land, harvesting and studying plants. She brings
great bunches of goodies home: today there is
valerian to be dried or tinctured, sage to be bound
into smudge sticks, and sweetgrass already braided
for use as incense. Some days her living room floor
is covered with sheets and drying plants.

"In traditional cultures around the world, there is
no distinction between food and medicine. There
are special foods for different times. A young girl
for instance, would eat differently than an old
man. A young boy would know to keep a look out
for certain berries in his wanderings and eat them
because this is what young men do, it is good for
them at this time in their lives."

The lessons of respect came early and stayed with
her. Whether she is harvesting, preparing, drying
or putting them into tinctures, creams, salads or
teas, Diana is ever aware of each plant's precious
life, of its spirit being offered for her use. She
harvests with great care, taking only what she
needs, making sure the plant will continue to
flourish. She makes sure not to take the whole
plant unless absolutely necessary, in which case
she makes certain there are more plants in the area
for the future.

Diana craves to be in touch with the earth, to be in
communion and even ceremony with the plants:

"We are in symbiosis. Plants are here for our
evolution; we move together, the earth is a family.
As we learn to be one with plants we evolve. It
goes beyond chemicals; there is an agreement.
When you gather plants in a sacred way, you in
agreement with the plant..

Interacting with plant beings on the Earth is a
doorway to higher consciousness. They carry the
key to unlocking the truth of our existence. I live
to awaken a greater depth of experience. When I
am in vibrational harmony with the plant, I feel
ecstasy, being at one with all that is... It's good to
be in that state by yourself."

There is always a surplus of something at Diana's.
I bought some ointment containing comfrey root,
olive oil, cocoa butter, lavender oil, and beeswax.
It is an amazing healing ointment, accelerates
healing of cuts, burns, chapping, and mucous
membranes. I am hoping it will help with a stress
rash I have on my leg. Right now she has about 20

jars available. She hesitates to put a price on them,
but donations are joyfully accepted.

Workshops are also available:

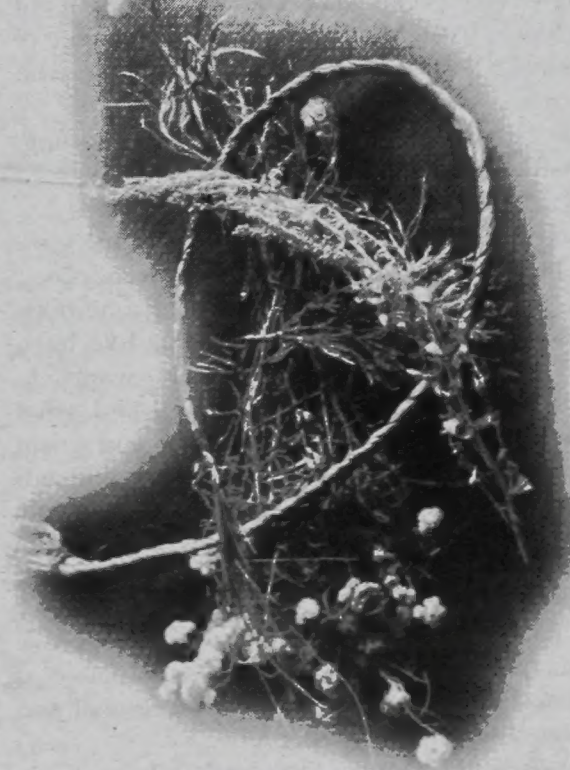
"I started teaching workshops 2yrs ago. Usually
they involve an herb walk where participants
learn to identify the herbs in their natural habitat.
After gathering the plants needed, tinctures and
ointments may be made. If it is an overnight
workshop, there may be a sacred circle."

Diana did a workshop recently on wild food in
which participants gathered wild edibles and
made bread together. "People think you need flour
from the store to make bread, but you really don't.
Really, flour is just about anything, ground up
finely. Any dried herb can be ground up into flour."
This workshop opened people's minds about what
you can eat: clover heads, lambs quarter, cleaver
seeds, yellowdock seeds, cattail root...

The next workshops will likely be about trees.
Did you know that some bark is edible? Diana
is interested in trees as medicine and as a source
of food, and she is looking forward to holding a
workshop in the spring and fall, identifying the
trees and harvesting from them.

As I take my leave this morning I have a great
feeling of having been reassured. The old wisdoms
are not lost. There are still people who walk the
wild places, if you know where to look.

*Anyone interested in joining Diana for a workshop,
consultation, or to find out about surplus tinctures and
ointments may give her a call at 613-757-3579.*



This is the first in a series of articles on alternative medicine. If you have a system you would like Genevieve to investigate, give us a call at the Courier, 888-448-1394.

When I think of the word, "massage", I flash on this scene: a movie star appears in an impossibly white fluffy bathrobe (I bought one of those a long time ago. It cost a fortune and it was perfectly white for about a week.) The rich woman drops the robe to the marble floor (-the floor!!) and lies down on the massage table by the pool, wearing nothing but very dark sunglasses, a dark honey tan and a sheet. Enter Stoic Sven, a wall of blond muscle with a Swedish accent and magic hands. He works on her quietly as she talks over the purchase of her next Jaguar with her manager...

Well, I'm here to tell you, times have changed. Massage Therapy is no longer a luxury for the rich and decadent-bathrobe-enabled. Today, many people in your community are making use of this alternative to combat stress, heal sports- or work-related injuries, even to help cure disease. Also, they do it to feel very, very good.

Meet Brian Tyrrell, Registered Massage Therapist in Barry's Bay. Also, he's my Sweetheart, but that is a whole other story. And he plays a mean rhythm guitar, but again, I digress. Brian's clients come from all walks of life: they are lumber men, housewives, construction workers, summer tourists, victims of car accidents, elderly people and hockey players. (Oh yeah, he also volunteers with the Killaloe Kings hockey team, acting as their unofficial medic.) No movie stars. Not that he'd be likely to recognize any, since he doesn't watch TV, and hasn't for many years. Of course, their perfectly white bathrobes might give them away (...never mind, I am letting it go...)

My point is that this form of therapy is no longer elitist. Anyone can call up Brian and make an appointment at his office, at the local hospital or the seniors' home. An office visit is \$60, or if he comes to you it ranges from \$70 or more, depending on how far he has to travel. And yes, folks, he does make house calls!

Brian's practice is run very much like a doctor's office. There is a separate reception area, which he shares with a chiropractor and an acupuncturist. His office has locked files to maintain confidentiality, and anything disclosed to Brian during a session stays with him. There is a plastic skeleton in the corner named Pierre, but he's not going anywhere quickly.

"One lady came in for her very first professional massage therapy treatment. She said she was feeling kind of nervous so I started telling her about what I do, and she said, 'It's ok, I've already talked to lots of your patients and they all told me how very professional you are.' It's all about developing trust. My clients have a wide range of experience levels, from first timers to those who have massages all the time" said Brian.

In the interest of sound and accurate reporting, Dear Reader, I have submitted my body to a massage. See what I do for you?

I asked Brian to put me through a first-time visit. This begins with a review of my medical history. Brian asks about current or previous conditions involving muscles, bones, lungs, digestive tract, circulatory system, everything. He wants to know about my stress levels (high), and what I drink during the day (water, juice and green tea) and how much I drink (not nearly enough water). He asks about past surgeries or accidents (broke my leg when I was six), any medications or supplements I am taking (asthma meds), and what kind of previous experience with massage I may have had (very little). He reviews my exercise habits (ha!) and checks out my posture (let's just say 'not perfect'). He conducts a nutritional and dietary assessment as well.

All of this information is then used to choose those

techniques that will work best in my treatment session. Brian makes use of a wide range of Swedish Massage techniques. These are called 'Swedish' not because a Swede invented them, but because he researched the traditional practices of other countries like China and India, and was the first to publish the information in the Western world. (Those Swedes!) The techniques range from the most gentle vibration to actually pounding on the body. A patient with a serious injury or skin ailment may only be able to handle the most gentle indirect energy, little more than a laying on of hands. At the other extreme, if there is deep lung congestion for instance, more rigorous methods are used. Of course, pounding or thumping a person isn't Plan A, in fact, it's pretty rare, and it never happens without consent. Don't worry, Brian won't just wail on you out of the blue.

The benefits of Massage Therapy are wide-ranging and somewhat surprising. I expected the general sense of bliss and wellbeing, and the improvement to my circulation. It was amazing. I did not know however, that it would also benefit my digestion! Brian explains it this way: massage decreases the firing of the sympathetic nervous system. This is the "fight or flight" system that responds to everything from a bear attack to misplacing your car keys for a moment. When you are stressed and uptight, any negative input can cause the system to overreact. It pumps chemicals like adrenaline throughout your body and this interferes with digestion and your ability to rest properly. (Mother Nature figures that when a bear is about to eat your arm you need to channel the energy you normally use for snacking and napping into something more useful). By decreasing the production of stress hormones, massage therapy allows your systems to behave normally. "It's not uncommon two thirds of the way into a treatment for a person's stomach to growl. They are starting to relax and digest their breakfast."

I ask Brian about the other methods

the exercises he shows me. That's fair, I guess. I threaten him, too, when he doesn't do what I say. Brian is also able to assess and treat the emotional components of an illness with flower remedies. (More about flower remedies in an upcoming issue. Just wait, you won't believe it.) He recommends dietary changes, supplements, even hydrotherapy, thereby giving his clients the tools they need to continue the progress of healing that was begun with the massage treatment. "I can make my clients feel better for a little while with a massage, but if they do their homework we can have substantial and sustained progress happening." He is not just helping with symptoms, but looking for causes and addressing those as well. "My goal is that my clients need me less and less", he says happily. It's enough to make an accountant weep

"What do you love about this work?"

"It's very satisfying. I've done a lot of different work in my life and nothing comes close to this level of satisfaction, where you know you've been able to help someone in a meaningful way. It's a two way street: you get what you give. As it is with everything."

by Genevieve Jones

Brian Tyrrell graduated in 1983 from the New Mexico School of Natural Therapeutics in Albuquerque. He went on to study at Sutherland-Chan school of Massage Therapy in Toronto and graduated in 1995. He has been a practicing Massage Therapist for over 20 years now in the Killaloe/

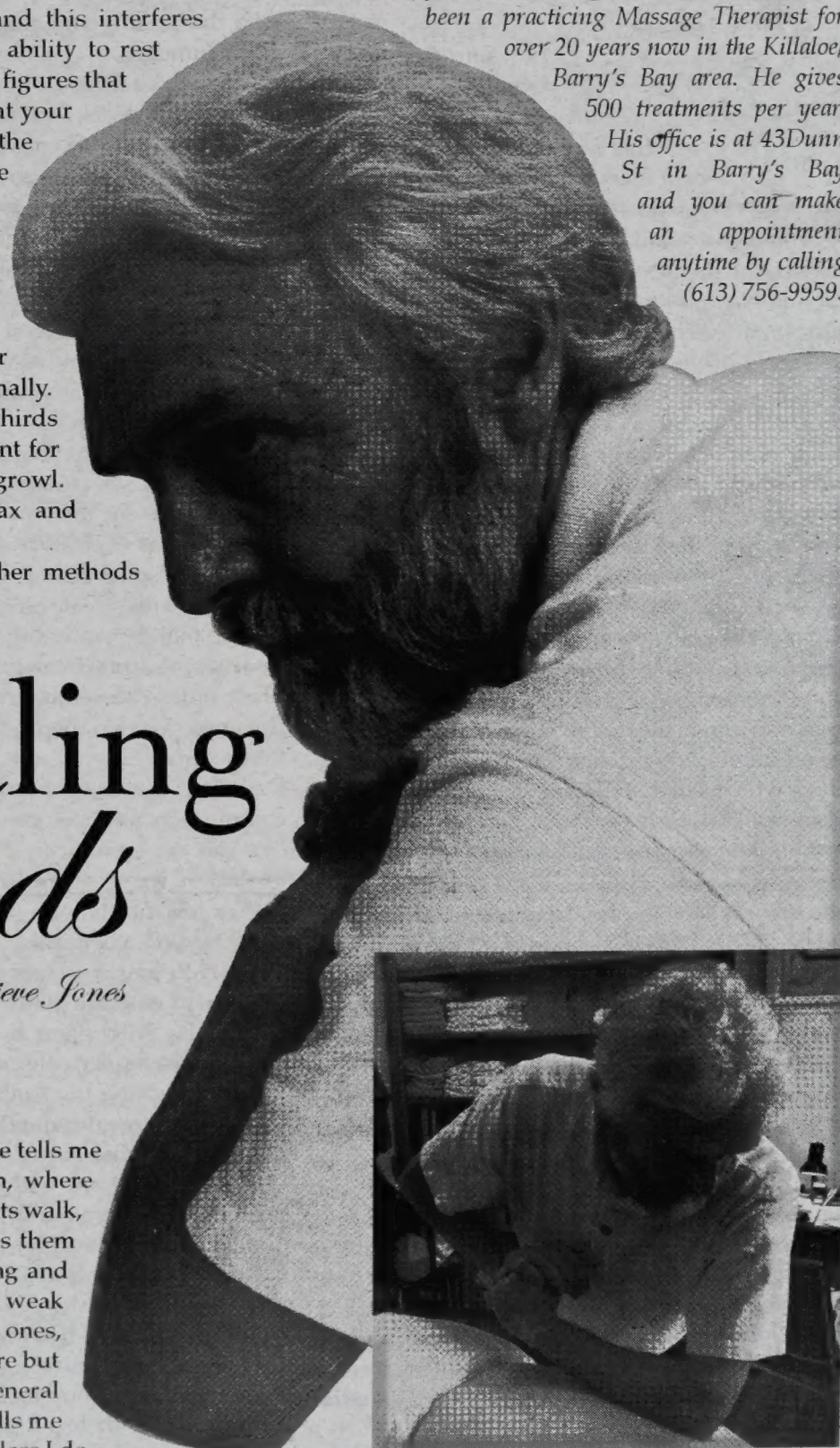
Barry's Bay area. He gives 500 treatments per year.

His office is at 43 Dunn St in Barry's Bay and you can make an appointment anytime by calling (613) 756-9959.

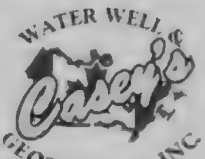
Healing hands

by Genevieve Jones

he uses to help people. He tells me about postural education, where he evaluates how his clients walk, sit, and stand. He teaches them whole new ways of sitting and standing that strengthen weak muscles and relax tight ones, improving not just posture but also circulation and general sense of wellbeing. He tells me I will develop a hump unless I do



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Dynamic Duo²

Glenn and Linda Rylott - White Pine Cottages

By: Jan Simon

Glenn and Linda Rylott are the owners and operators of White Pine Cottages on Lake St. Peter. They moved here from the Toronto/Caldeon East area 5 years ago.

Glenn organized consumer trade shows and large events. His company designed and built displays for such events as the Auto Show, Sportsman Show, Leadership Conventions, and even visits from the Pope and Royalty.

Linda was in the retail travel business. She and her brother supplied a product to travel agencies. It was an advisory for people traveling outside the county and covered information on such important items as passport requirements and health regulations.

Glenn and Linda have been married for 31 years. Glenn's mother still lives in Combermere and during his youth Glenn loved to spend summers with his grandparents in the Combermere, Lake Kamaniskeg area. After their marriage they

continued to cottage in the area. Like so many of us, the more they visited the harder it was to leave.

Five years ago May 1st they realized their dream and purchased White Pine Cottages starting a new country life. Immediately they undertook huge renovations and by July 1st had completed four of the six cottages. Rustic was the term they used to describe the character and charm of White Pines when they took over. They gutted each and every one of them, adding their own touch to them all. Individual bathrooms replaced the original communal shower and washroom facility. Each cottage was lined in knotty pine and outfitted with modern appliances and furniture. Each has its own propane heater, deck, dock and gas BBQ. The view is spectacular from anywhere on the property. Over the fall and early summer cottages 5 and 6 were completed. The resort is now open year round,

Linda's mother lives on the property and enjoys being near Glenn and Linda. The other member

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Green Olives ☐	☐ Green Olives
Ham ☐	☐ Ham
Sliced Tomato ☐	☐ Sliced Tomato
Hot Peppers ☐	☐ Hot Peppers
Bacon ☐	☐ Bacon
Mushrooms ☐	☐ Mushrooms
Extra Cheese ☐	☐ Extra Cheese

of the family is Emma, the beautiful yellow lab. Emma considers herself the official greeter and every Saturday during the summer eagerly awaits a new group of vacationers. Emma does her job well. So well in fact they enrolled her in the Pet Therapy Dog course run by BARCK (Bancroft Area Recreational Canine Klub) in conjunction with the Manor. Those who graduate are welcome to visit residents at the Manor. There is no question that Emma graduated with honours.

Glenn and Linda have joined into community life, enjoying local darts and volunteering at the Hunter's dinner and the Maynooth Food Bank. Glenn has also spent one year as Chair of the Maynooth Business Association.

The clientele of White Pines consists of hunters, fishermen, families of cottagers and more recently group of ATV'rs. Glenn tells us that sales of ATV's outrank that of snowmobiles 4 to 1 these days. ATV's are a three season sport. As soon as the snow is gone out they come, mud and all. All are welcome, Dogs welcome as well. Snowmobilers are just 1 km from the main trail, which is a huge advantage.

It is easy to see why this outgoing couple are making a success of their business. White Pine Cottages are located on Centre Road off Highway 127 in Lake St. Peter. Open All Year Round. They can be reached 613-338-2655, or www.whitepinecottages.ca

by Jan Simon



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Patricia Huddart

see full story page 2

"I was living in an apartment complex where Groucho's daughter, Melinda Marx lived. She was an actress and we became friends. One day, there was a knock on my door and when I answered there was Melinda and Groucho standing there. I was shocked. I mean here was a true legend standing right in front of me. I never did one intelligent thing. I couldn't even talk. Of course, he played it up and did that cigar thing, raised his eyebrows, told jokes, and all of that stuff."

"Later, I was invited to Melinda's wedding and I practiced so I could say something to him. "When we met in the reception line, I said, 'How do you do Mr. Marx?' He remembered me and said, 'Oh, and she talks too!' He was a charming man."

Patricia Huddart

they are so...VOGUE

One of our local girls, born and raised in Harcourt would like to make her community proud of her as she works hard to be a high profile model.

Jocelyn Donaldson, 17 years old has gone to school in Wilberforce and Haliburton and is completing

her grade 12, this year. Last year she attended Mode-Elle Modeling and Talent classes. Rushing, each Tuesday, all winter long, straight from school, to Belleville to make it for a 6 pm class. This fall she auditioned and has been chosen to attend the CMTC (Canadian Model and Talent Convention) in Toronto this coming spring, 2007.

There, she will have the opportunity to meet and learn from over 50 of the world's top modeling and talent agents. She will spend four days in workshops, seminars, competitions and interviews with agents from around the world.

An exciting venture, for a country girl, going to the big city to full fill a dream of being a model.

You may know Jocelyn best, in her breeches and helmet as South Algonquin Trails, head trail guide.

She also competes at the Minden Fair and Pony Club events such as The Prince Phillip Games, Stadium Jumping, and Rally, which is like

eventing - jumping the big cross country jumps. Jocelyn, with her ever present smile and winning personality should have no trouble moving from riding boots to high heels and breeches to mini skirts.

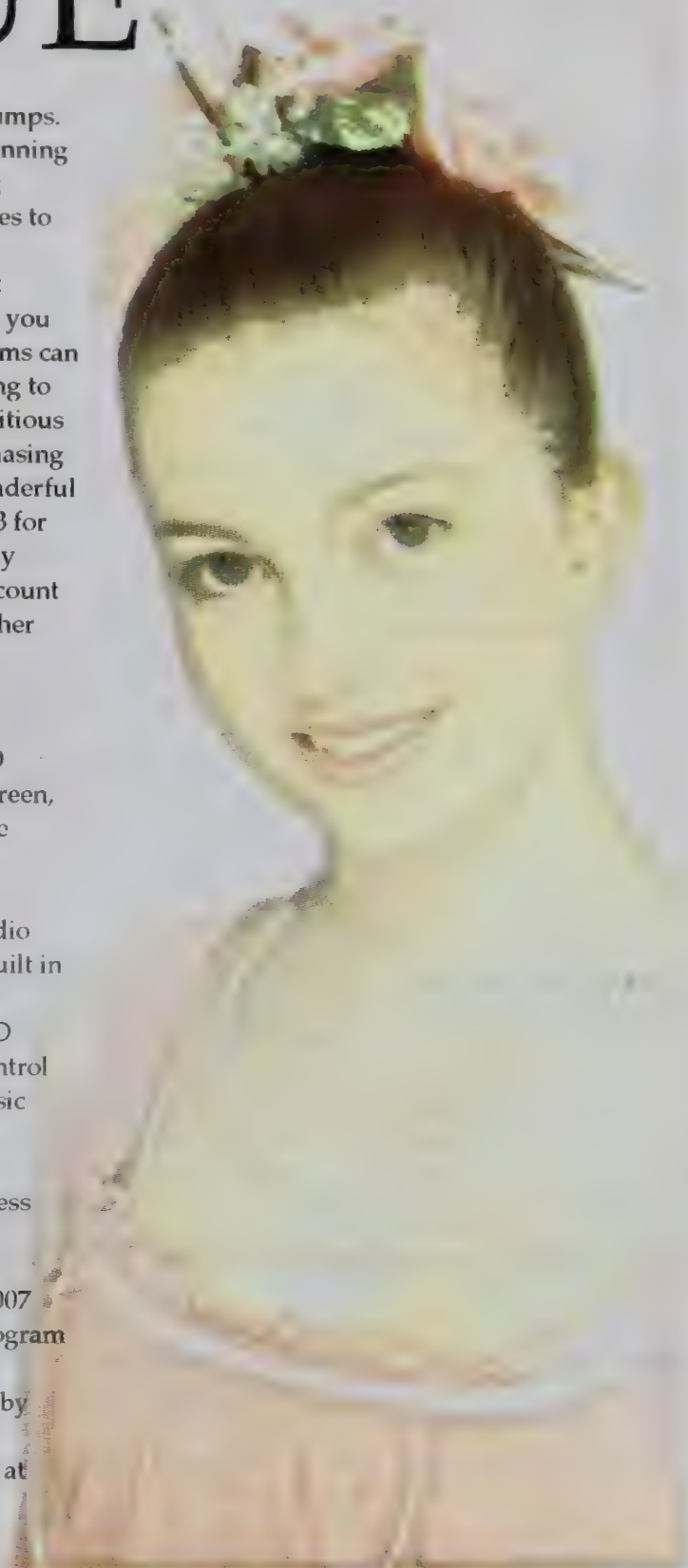
The industry promotes self sufficiency, so it doesn't matter who you are, if you work hard enough, your dreams can come true. So, anyone wishing to support Jocelyn and her ambitious endeavor can do so by purchasing a ticket for one of seven wonderful prizes for just \$2 a ticket or 3 for \$5. All ticket sales go directly toward Jocelyn's CMTC account at Mode Elle to help cover her convention costs.

The prizes are: 1st to 7th
20" LCD KossTV,
7" Macvision Mobil DVD Player with additional screen,
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RCA Digital Music Studio with MP3 player and built in MP3 Docking Station,
8.4" Koss Portable DVD Player with remote control
Sony MP3 Digital Music Player
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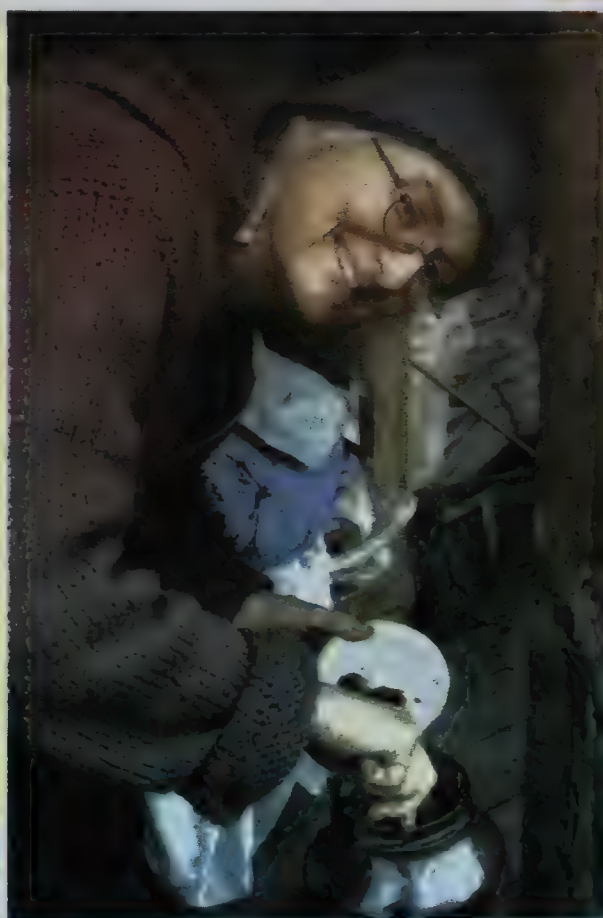
Anyone wishing to sponsor Jocelyn with a donation of \$25 or more before March 15, 2007 are guaranteed to be listed in the CMTC Program Book under Mode Elle Sponsors.

Your support would be greatly appreciated by Jocelyn.

Tickets are available at Donna's Hairstyling at 3882 Loop Rd. in downtown Harcourt. 705-448-2168



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Kimchi in Killaloe



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Acai & Passion Fruit Martini

- 1/2 cup Ice Cubes
- 1 cup Compliments Balance Acai-Juice Blend
- 5 oz gin
- 1 1/2 oz passion fruit cognac
- 4 tsp fresh lime juice
- 2 fresh passion fruit or mango slices
- Raspberries to garnish

Put ice in a martini shaker. Add acai juice, gin, passion fruit cognac, and lime juice. Shake well. Pour into chilled martini glasses. Garnish with fruit.

Total Prep Time: 5 minutes
Serves 2

TIP White wine goes well with a variety of spicy foods, like Thai, Chinese or Indian.

Home

at the cottage

FEATURE

There is nothing worse than throwing a cocktail party for your friends and not having the time to enjoy it. No host wants to be stuck in the kitchen juggling last minute details while everyone is having fun. Hors d'oeuvres are easy and elegant. Gastronomic delights. Little tidbits served on little plates. A small meal to wet and excite the palate.

B Bite size food that can be prepared ahead of time so you can enjoy the party too. If these recipes aren't easy enough there is always M&M's!!!! Hope you all have very successful holiday season parties.

PUTTING ON THE RITZ

Ritz crackers
8oz cream cheese
chopped red pepper
chopped green onion
Spread cracker with cheese. Top with onion or pepper or both. Very festive!!!!

HOT STUFF

Jar of red or green pepper jelly
8oz cream cheese
Baguette sliced or assorted crackers
Place cream cheese on plate. Pour jelly over cheese. Serve with baguette or assorted crackers.

DATING

Pitted dates
blue cheese
bacon slices
toothpicks

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Soak toothpicks in water. in the hollow of the pitted date place small amount of blue cheese. Wrap with bacon. Secure with toothpick. Cook for 8-10 minutes or until bacon is crisp.

GALZED KIELBASA

1 pound of Kielbasa
1 cup of grape jelly
1 cup of chili sauce

Over medium heat stir jelly and sauce. Cut sausage into 1 to 2 inch slices. Simmer in sauce, flipping over in order to coat on both sides over a period of one hour. The longer these simmer the better they taste. Reduce heat to low if cooking for more than 2 hours.

NUTTY BRIE

handful of pecans
half a cup of dates chopped
wedge of brie cheese
2 tbsp of butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toast pecans for 8-10 minutes. Sprinkle nuts and dates over cheese. In a saucepan over medium heat, melt sugar until caramel color. Incorporate butter. Pour over nut and date topped brie. This will harden quickly. Serve with assorted crackers or baguette.

PARTY BITES

1 2/3 cups of self rising flour
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
1/4 cup melted butter or margarine
1/2 salsa

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Grease cookie sheet. Combine flour and cheese. Add butter and salsa. Knead dough very gently. Do not over work. Roll out into rectangle. Cut with pizza cutter into 1x1 inch strips. Place on cookie sheet 1/2 inch apart. Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden brown.

ARTICHOKE CHEESE DIP

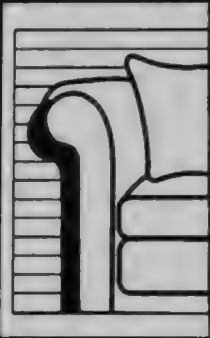
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup cheddar cheese
1/2 cup Monterey Jack Cheese
1/8 tsp onion salt
1 tsp dill weed
1/8 tsp lemon pepper
1 can artichoke hearts

Preheat oven 350 degrees. Combine all ingredients and mix well. Pour into 2 quart baking dish. bake uncovered 30 for minutes. Serve with toasted french bread



Fill a cruiser with food

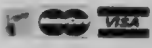
Officers from the Haliburton Highlands OPP were encouraging grocery shoppers at the Wilberforce Foodland to make a food donation for their annual drive for the food bank this holiday season. They tell us that this year's drive has been exceptionally successful, and that the truck was pretty much filled within just a few hours. Many thanks to all that supported the drive, and to the officers for taking the time to meet and greet local shoppers. Doing their best in many ways to help support their communities, these officers also want to remind everyone not to drink and drive.



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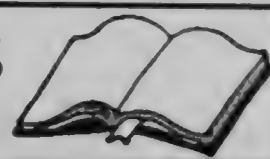
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Horoscopes

in the stars

January 2007

FEATURE

Capricorn

On the 1st, while some people's New Year's parties are winding down, yours is just beginning. On the 5th and 6th, art is where it's at for you. On the 10th and 11th, you behave in a mature and becoming manner when presented with an irritating situation. By the 21st and 22nd, it's time to let loose with one of those deep insights you're known for. On the 29th, spend a long, relaxing evening at home.

Aquarius

On the 5th and 6th, you've done what you can do when it comes to ironing out the kinks in a relationship. Now just sit back and enjoy the ride – even if it's bumpy. On the 15th, you're bringing people together and showing them that they aren't as different as they think they are. On the 23rd, if you aren't flexing your muscles at work, you're at the gym, training so you can do it later.

Pisces

On the 5th, it's of the utmost importance that you give free reign to your creative impulses. On the 10th, there's a whole heck of a lot happening. On the 15th, something major shifts and you come to a fork in the road. On the 19th, you might want to use a little time to check in with yourself. On the 27th and 28th, you'll end the month with some very nice momentum.

Aries

On the 7th and 8th, if you feel like it's time to deal with the details, you're right! On the 14th and 15th, take a look at your living situation. By the 19th and 20th, you're pitching in and helping out. On the 24th, you're doing everything well. On the 27th and 28th, be sure to communicate with others.

Taurus

On the 5th and 6th, if something isn't working – whether it's a relationship or a mural project you're organizing in the neighborhood – you'll find a solution. On the 21st and 22nd, there's no problem so small that it escapes your notice. By the 25th and 26th, you're at your best. On the 29th, stay close to home. That's where you feel best right now.

Gemini

On the 8th, any plans you make go from 'could happen' to 'mission accomplished' in a hurry. On the 13th, it's time to check in with your social situation. By the 16th, you could be tuckered out! Be sure to get enough sleep on the 19th and 20th, because you want to be on your toes for the 21st. By the 29th, you know just what you want to do next!

Cancer

On the 2nd and 3rd, get out your party clothes. On the 7th and 8th, you could be astounded at how quickly all these oh-so-positive changes are taking place. On the 17th, give yourself a day off. On the 25th and 26th, it's problem-solving time. On the 29th, guess what? It's a whole lot of great all over again.

Leo

The 5th and 6th promise to be pretty thrilling in themselves. On the 17th, whatever you've been working on, it's time to wrap it up! On the 21st and 22nd, you're in the middle of some serious changes. On the 26th, get ready to welcome a new state of calm into your life. On the 29th, it's time to identify one thing that's not working – and get rid of it.

Virgo

On the 1st, it's not only the first day of the New

Year. For you, it's also a major turning point. By the 7th and 8th, you feel really grounded. By the 23rd and 24th, you're making waves. On the 28th, put on your 'I'm a grown-up' hat, because it looks like you're having another one of those moments in which you let go of old ways of feeling, thinking and doing. On the 29th, get a friend to give you a massage. You deserve it.

Libra

On the 5th and 6th, double-check: Are you bringing your creative skills to bear on your professional life? On the 10th, there's something very exciting brewing, and you're in the right mood to jump in the mix. On the 19th and 20th, you could take on a new position in the community. By the 29th, things have calmed down. Settle in for a little self-reflection.

Scorpio

On the 5th and 6th, are you finding (already) that opening up in little ways is making it easier to let go of some larger negative patterns? By the 12th and 13th, you've more than earned a spectacular couple of days. On the 21st and 22nd, you might have to accept something you don't like. On the 26th, take a break. On the 29th, ask yourself how well you've done being open this month.

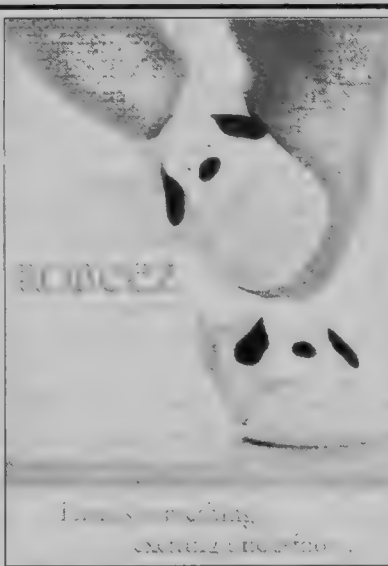
Sagittarius

By the 10th, you're ready for a little pruning in your social life. On the 15th, you're feeling better than ever. By the 19th and 20th, you might want to turn your attention to your friends. Who are they? How well do you really know them? On the 22nd, make a change (any change). On the 27th, spend the afternoon relaxing. Something happens on the 29th that you can really be proud of.



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Is the Scrawler the only one who is in absolute disbelief that Christmas is almost here? Remember when you were a kid and summer vacation seemed to last forever and not 2 months? The countdown to Christmas was agonizingly slow. Why does time fly by nowadays? Maybe because there are so many interesting sports going on at this time of year and we're trying to find the time to enjoy each and every one...or maybe just because we're getting old.

Looks like the Scrawlers proud and bold prediction of the Toronto Raptors making some noise this year may have been a little premature and off-base (okay an awful lot). They're scoring (but not defending); and playing exciting basketball (but not winning). Things are probably not going well when franchise cornerstone (and all-around good citizen) Chris Bosh is arguing with teammates on the court.

After a surprisingly good start to the season the Toronto Maple Leafs are falling back to earth a little. Leaf fans who had been walking with a little swagger may be walking a little less tall the last couple of weeks. Division rivals like the Boston Bruins and the hated Ottawa Senators really seem to have the Buds number. Hey John Ferguson: you STILL need a defenseman. Horrendous Hal Gill just doesn't cut it.

For those of us that enjoy the Ultimate Fighting Championship November was a month to remember. Canadian welterweight George St. Pierre knocked the stuffing out of legendary long-time champion Matt Hughes, simultaneously wiping the smirk off his face and whipping the arrogance out of his hide. St. Pierre is a rising star in the world of mixed martial arts and best of all he is a typical nice, humble Canadian boy.

Old Teddy Rogers wasn't kidding when he said the Blue Jays could dust off his wallet, blow off the cobwebs and spend some money to make the team competitive. After their big signings last winter,



Illustration by Don Spencer

Suddenly Single Sports Scrawl

by lorne greer

they started this off-season with a bang by signing aging slugger Frank Thomas. The Big Hurt is getting a little long-in-the-tooth but experienced a renaissance last season and put up some huge numbers. If Toronto can add another starter they can compete with anyone....and yes that includes the Yankees and the Red Sox.

Ah, to be Tony Romo. Who's Tony Romo you ask?? Don't feel bad, no one else knew the answer to that till 2 months ago. Back then he was just an undersized backup quarterback with the Dallas Cowboys whose girlfriend had just dumped him. Then the mobile Romo was inserted for the glacier-like statue known as Drew Bledsoe and the rest is history. He has led Dallas back to Super Bowl contention and become the toast of Big D while doing it. The best part (or worst if you're a jealous person like the Scrawler) is that he is also dating Jessica Simpson. The Scrawler is a huge Cowboy fan, but all that is more luck than 1 man deserves!

You've got to love some pro athletes don't you?? Falcons quarterback Michael Vick flips the fans the bird after a recent home loss. How dare they boo him after he had just thrown for a whopping 80 yards? Chris Webber, being paid \$15 million a year by the 76'ers to be a shell of the player he used to be, wants out of Philadelphia. Big market for you C-Web. Stephon Marbury (or self-proclaimed Starbury) refuses to take a shot during a game, and then sits with a towel over his head on the bench while his teammates rally for a comeback. Seems the \$20 million team cancer didn't enjoy being told that a point guards job is to PASS first. The attitudes that jerks like these have still amaze me. Instead of enjoying their fame and money doing something that the rest of us would kill to have a chance to try even once, they pout, complain, and spew vitriol at the front office and fans alike.

Just to end on a happier note the NFL playoffs are coming up and that is gridiron gold for those of us religious about such things. Between that, my fantasy football teams and a good Grey Cup game just past, the Scrawler is on some sort of a football high, or overload. That will be enough to keep me happy throughout Christmas and the New Year. The Scrawler would like to wish you and your families all the best during the holidays, talk to you (I mean write to you) soon!

by Lorne Greer

When we sit down to watch the 10 o'clock news, most of us assume that it is produced by professional newscasters.

Sure, there's corporate and government pressure and newscasters are forever subject to manipulation by self-interested sources, advertisers, embedded reporters, cozy situations between government and corporate media owners and the like. But if we're careful, we can sort it out. The more assiduous watchers play the field, checking out multiple sources.

Today, there's an ever-growing industry in fake news slickly produced by a long list of corporations, including Allstate, Intel and drug manufacturers.

Connections between political parties, lobbying firms, oil companies and scientists connected to corporations are complicated. However, the Center for Media Democracy in the United States put out a couple of studies this year tracking what stations use these videos and identifying their corporate sources.

Here's an example. Earlier this year in the United States, a Republican PR firm for oil lobbyists produced a video called *Global Warming and Hurricanes: All Hot Air?* Over images of hurricane gales smashing away at coastal communities, a reporter-like voice speaks of the lack of evidence between current extreme weather and global warming. Two "top" scientists are quoted, both denying the connection of global warming to changes in the weather. At least one scientist has ideological connections to right-wing organizations.

Any respectable scientist would not deny the fact that storm intensities have increased and sea temperatures have risen over the last 30 years. Whether there is a connection to global warming is less clear; most scientists are understandably reluctant to make definitive statements about this without more evidence. But to deny the possible significance of global warming is more damaging than to acknowledge that we must take action now to understand what is going on.

The news station that aired the offending video sent it out uncut and without acknowledging that the "reporter" was a fake. The news announcer introduced the piece saying, "Hurricane seasons for the next 20 years could be severe. But don't blame global warming."

Perhaps we do need to hear from the (expert) doubters in the crowd. But news is supposed to have at least a shred of objectivity. How about a line or two from a 1995 report entitled *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change* compiled by top scientists and published by the British government?

"It is now plain that the emission of greenhouse gases... is causing global warming at a rate that is unsustainable," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who introduced the report. The most significant point in the report involved a "tipping point" after which human destruction of the planet could not be reversed: we the living may scrape by, but it's a hell of a legacy to leave our children.

Meanwhile, our lifelines to reliable information are being constantly muddled by reports biased toward corporations, governments and individual whose money-making endeavors involve serious destruction of the planet. The same firm that produced the above-mentioned video puts out satirical pieces, organizes skeptical scientists to talk on radio shows and pays people to write editorials to ridicule such things as Al Gore's recent documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. (Much of this information on media propaganda can be found on the Center for Media Democracy's website at prwatch.org.)

Some news stations have been guilty of editing out information in videos sent to them that identify the source. Others have redone the voice-

over with the same script but with a local reporter, giving it an air of credibility. For example, a couple of stations ran a piece about how people knew little about how to treat a common cold. It was created by Matrix Initiatives who manufacture Zicam a chemical cold remedy. Lots of shots of their product were featured. Other videos feature a public relations person posing as a reporter.

So why would a self-respecting television station use such deceptive means when their very credibility is at stake? One reason may be the reduction in staff; as television-station owners move more and more openly toward seeing their organizations as being primarily money-making operations rather than public services, staff is cut to the bone. Video news releases (VNRs) come from organizations that know how to produce professional pieces that copy the format and tone of a real news release. They are free to the television station. With a bit of doctoring, they can look like they were produced by the station.

All the fake news that's fit to print

by Peter R. Snell

It's not just corporations that are in on the game. Recently, California Governor (and movie star) Arnold Schwarzenegger's office put out four videos promoting changes in labour laws. The videos contained no reference to their source and only one side of the story. After the videos were aired, the issue some unions took the issue to court. A Superior Court judge in Sacramento ruled that the fake news reports created "the misleading impression that the regulations are unopposed by any segments of the public and are not subject to criticism, thereby discouraging any further questioning or investigation of the matter by the public." The report had contained only comments from the public that supported Schwarzenegger's legislation. Because of this, "the public's ability to participate in the rule-making process was undermined," said the judge.

Making fake news is big business, for both private PR firms and for the government. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture has a Broadcast Media and Technology Center, with a \$2.8 million (US) budget. It creates over 90 news stories a year, including video and radio pieces. It employs eight television production staff and five reporters, plus other multimedia and administrative personnel. The objective: to sell the U.S. position to farmers and other citizens. Often the video and radio sources are not cited. On ploy involved government reporters signing off, saying "This is so-and-so, reporting" (pause) "for the U.S. Department of Agriculture." The pause allowed stations to easily edit the final section.

The Bush administration has taken fake news to new heights. For example, in one Bush-administration piece an Iraqi-American joyously shouts, "Thank you America! Thank you Bush!" after the fall of Baghdad. Another piece on efforts to strengthen aviation security has the "reporter" saying Bush's initiatives were "one of the most remarkable campaigns in aviation history." Both pieces were scripted by the Bush regime.

By the way, it's against the law in the U.S. to pay for propaganda with public funds. But, like none

before it, the present regime has scant respect for the law unless it helps their cause.

For their part, VNR producers claim they are only trying to help by providing information to viewers. Douglas Simon, the president and CEO of DS Simon Productions, a PR video firm based out of New York, said in an interview that VNRs are nothing more than information that is provided to viewers.

"Any content that's provided to stations goes through journalist gatekeepers before it makes it on the air," he said. I suggest that more than a few of our gatekeepers may be snoozing or have other instructions from their employers.

Ah, this is all very well you say, but surely it can't happen up here in Canada. Indeed it seems to be not so widespread and information is scarce. We do have a good public radio and television system that bypasses the worst of it, but I'm sure we are by no means free of the problem. Through cable and satellite, we get to see many U.S. stations and American stations like CNN send news items to Canada.

In Canada, following Bush, the Harper regime is hard at work attempting to control the news media in other ways. It's not so much VNRs that plague us, but a concerted effort by Harper and Co. to decide who will ask the questions and when. Journalists have attempted to resist, but it seems, at least at first pass, Harper has had the upper hand. Harper has been picking and choosing how he gets his word out, through interview only with friendly media. Generally, he enjoys denigrating the media.

For all the concerns we have about the media, it still seems something we should try to protect but recent events indicate it continues to slip in the public's trust. The magazine *The Economist* said this: "If there is nothing special about the press, then there is nothing special about what it does. News can be anything — including dressed-up government video footage. And anyone can provide it, including the White House, which through local networks, can become a new distributor in its own right... In short, the traditional notion that the media play a special role in informing people is breaking down."

In Bush and Harper's view, that's a good thing; the media are just a bunch of left-wing hacks anyway, so the best way to deal with it is to talk only with those who agree to promote their message. For them, public debate is a negative thing; a docile public ready to take the advice of its leaders is much more comfortable. As each leader gets his word out, shaping opinion on the road to the next election (or in survival until retirement), a vigilant media becomes harder and harder to find.

A recent university study showed that comedy fake news programs like *Jon Stewart* or the *Colbert Report* in the States, and *Rick Mercer* or *This Hour Has 22 minutes* in Canada provides as much information to watchers as regular news programs. As Rick cheers on our military or hangs out with the prime minister at one moment, then rips a strip off him the next, it becomes unclear to me where silliness ends and fake news begins. As politicians are lampooned, I can congratulate myself that I and my fellow couch potatoes, sitting comfortably mesmerized by the screen, are too clever to be fooled by these spin doctors. But I'm not sure what my political role is. We become receptacles for all manner of propaganda, but have no active role beyond going to the polls every four or five years. By that time, we'll be so filled with the "correct" message that we'll have no desire or ability to engage in political debate.

That prospect scares me. Whatever shambles our media is in, it's worth doing battle to protect it as best we can.

by Peter R. Snell

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The Highlands
Courier

Corey Glass seems like a regular 23-year-old; he likes skateboarding, grilled cheese sandwiches and Quentin Tarantino movies; he doesn't enjoy illegally occupying Middle Eastern countries.

Glass spent five months in Iraq as a sergeant with the United States National Guard, before becoming a 'war-resister.' He left the army, lived underground in the US for eight months and then came to Canada in August, claiming refugee status.

"When I joined the National Guard, they told me the only way I would be in combat is if there were troops occupying the United States," said Glass in a phone interview from Toronto, where he is searching for an apartment. "I signed up to defend people and do humanitarian work filling sandbags if there was a hurricane; I should have been in New Orleans, not Iraq."

There could be upwards of 200 American soldiers who refuse to fight in Iraq clandestinely living in Canada, according to Lee Zaslofsky, co-ordinator of War Resisters Support Campaign, the group trying to secure status for conscientious objectors. "None of the hearings at the immigration and refugee board have gone well," says Zaslofsky, who came to Canada in the 1970s after refusing to fight in Vietnam.

The central argument being used by war resisters is that the war in Iraq is illegal and if they remain in the US, they'll be forced to fight in an illegal and immoral war or face the consequences.

"In every case, the immigration board has decided they won't listen to arguments about the legality or illegality of the war in Iraq, which obviously undermines us," says Zaslofsky.

"The US-led invasion of Iraq was an illegal act that contravened the UN charter," said UN Chief Kofi Annan during a 2004 interview with the BBC.

Being the custodian of International law, Annan's opinion is worth noting.

If the war was and is illegal, then Canada has a moral duty to provide sanctuary for people who won't participate in criminal activities; a 'responsibility to protect', to use the rhetoric of the powerful.

Zaslofsky thinks the Supreme Court will eventually decide whether or not the resisters can stay here rather than fight, if Parliament doesn't get involved first.

"We aren't just treating this as a legal matter, but also a political matter," said Zaslofsky. "We think Canada has an obligation to protect these people

Grilled Cheese and War Crimes

US soldier who refuses assignment in Iraq claims refugee status in Canada

by Chris Arsenault

who are coming north because they are taking the same position that Canada did: opposing the war." His group has gathered 35,000 signatures on petitions demanding Canada treat Iraq War objectors the same way we treated Vietnam War resisters.

Thus far, the immigration and refugee board, whose mandate is different from the courts, has ruled that rank and file soldiers are not liable for participating in an illegal war because they weren't the ones who decided to launch an invasion.

Glass never personally witnessed human rights violations during his service but he "heard stories from people coming back from duty." Recently, The Lancet, one of the world's most respected medical journals, published a study showing the death toll among Iraqis as a result of the US-led invasion has now reached an estimated 655,000 people. The figures were quickly condemned by the Bush administration for inaccuracy, although they were nevertheless compiled by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore and validated by four separate, independent experts.

"Although such death rates might be common in times of war, the combination of a long duration and tens of millions of people affected has made this the deadliest international conflict of the 21st

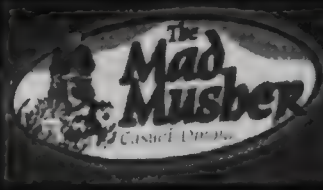
century and should be of grave concern to everyone," write the study's authors.

In an international context, there isn't much anyone can do about the accusations of America's conduct in Iraq. The US refused to ratify the international criminal court, so the army can continue violating the law without prosecution. Humans developed law to protect the weak from the strong. When the powerful are above the law, the whole foundation of decent society collapses.

After the Second World War, at the famous Nuremberg trials for German war criminals, the four judges of the tribunal (American, British, French and Russian) wrote a famous passage declaring the crime of aggressive war to be, "the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

Glass doesn't compare America to the Nazis, but an illegal war is an illegal war. According to the former sergeant, "In Germany some members of the Third Reich probably said this was a bad idea and didn't want to participate and that's what I have decided."

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I've been reading a lot lately. Partly this is because my main computer is taking an extended holiday waiting for a repair part in short supply and partly because I have just discovered a horde of novels previously purchased from the hospital auxiliary in Haliburton that somehow managed to hide themselves away until recently.

Mostly these are murder mysteries. It's fascinating to read these stories that often feature a murder per chapter with the hero unable to stop the mayhem until the last page. I wonder what kind of mind can invent all those people, often described in great detail, and then dispose of them so quickly.

I've also been reading the news from the Toronto Star. I've been able to do that recently because I got my old slow computer hitched up to the internet. Oh, I know I could just go and buy a newspaper at the corner store as they do in Toronto except the corners are a whole lot farther from home here.

After reading the daily news, the murder mysteries seem like kiddie books. Real people can be nastier and far more vicious than anything invented by an author. And at one murder per chapter, novels are tame compared with reality. "21 found tortured and executed" "Mass graves found" "Monthly death toll from insurgents approaching 4,000; many more injured" "Conflict has resulted in more than 200,000 deaths so far" You don't usually see those lines in a novel.

Collectively, the world spent \$1.12 trillion in 2005 on the military, much of it on devices designed to kill people. In case you want to send me a cheque for that amount, the figure you write is "\$1,120,000,000,000.00". That's US\$173 for every man, woman and child on the planet!

Footnote 1: Why are anti-abortionists, who maintain that life is sacred, usually strong supporters of military solutions?

Footnote 2: The US has spent about \$300 billion on the Iraq war and killed about 200,000 Iraqis. That comes to \$1.5 million per Iraqi. Couldn't they get a cheaper rate from the Mafia?

The fact remains that people spend one hell of a lot of money trying to blow away other people. \$1.12 trillion is 2.5% of the total world GDP. We have made amazing advances in transportation, communication, living styles, entertainment, etc. You would have thought that we could have found a better way of solving conflicts but apparently the only advances since Neanderthal times is the methods used to blow the other guy away.

Humans are the only really intelligent animal on the planet, right? I mean, humans have been saying that for a long time now, so it must be right. Let's face it, humans invented the flush toilet so

What a novel idea

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 the Mafia?

by Peter Charters

they don't have to go out in the cold or the bugs to do what every animal has to do regularly. That's clever, and very much appreciated, especially as winter sets in.

Mind you, what humans do with the results after the flush does not always make sense. Lots of cities merely collect it and then dump it into a nearby river or ocean. That makes as much sense as shipping your garbage to another country - such as Michigan or London. It's not your problem any more. Out of sight, out of mind.

Over the last billion years or so, the planet has managed to bury a lot of carbon deep underground, in the form of coal, oil and gas. Over the last couple hundred years, clever humans have been digging that carbon out and putting it back into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, an important greenhouse gas - thereby raising the global temperature.

What a clever idea! It reduces winter heating bills, gradually shifting the peak periods of energy usage to the summer when air conditioners try to keep us from roasting.

Years ago we just lived on this planet; now we "manage" it. Look at a map in the hunting regulations; the province is divided into smaller areas - "Wildlife Management Units". We "manage" the air, the water, the land and everything that grows. Aren't we smart!

We "managed" the cod fish almost out of existence and we're working hard on the rest of the sea life. In late November, the UN wanted to pass a resolution banning bottom trawling in international waters. Bottom trawling is a practice that drags nets, heavily weighted at the bottom, along the ocean floor so as to scoop up every living thing. Canada "managed" to prevent that resolution from passing in the fear that environmentalists might use that as a pretext to have a similar resolution apply to coastal waters. Clever, eh?

In the early 1800s people in Canada talked about the "inexhaustible" forests. Within 80 years we "managed" to exhaust them. A significant part of our oxygen comes from the forests of the Amazon watershed so people down there are "managing" those - burning them down because they can't cut fast enough.

The aboriginal peoples lived here for many thousands of years and never had to boil their drinking water. There were lots of fish in the water and animals roaming the "inexhaustible" forests. Then the foreigners arrived and "managed" all those problems.

One thing we haven't managed very well is the population explosion. It seems there are two approaches to the problem.

It has been well documented that the birth rate falls dramatically as the standard of living rises. Raising the standard of living in the poor countries has the unfortunate side effect of eliminating that enormous pool of cheap labour that we rely on for consumer goods.

Alternatively, we can raise the death rate by military action to equal the birth rate. The side effect here is beneficial - employment in the armed forces and in the armaments industry.

Being members of such an intelligent, inventive and creative species with high moral values and an advanced set of ethics, we naturally choose the second. It's far better to blow the excess population away than to pay more for a t-shirt.

by Peter Charters

"God created man in his own image". (Genesis 1:26-27) If so, God must be one sorry old fellow.

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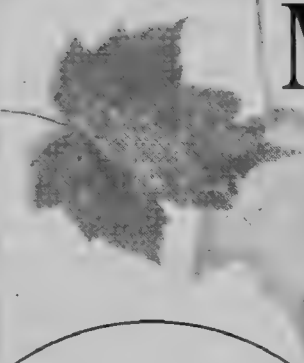


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Canada's diplomatic maneuvers at the UN and WTO could weaken international environmental law and accelerate the spread of unpopular genetically-modified organisms around the world.

In 2003, Canada, along with the US and Argentina, initiated proceedings at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to challenge the European Community's (EC) ban on Genetically-Modified Organisms (GMOs). On September 29 of this year, the WTO declared the EC's GMO regulations illegal and instructed it to modify its laws accordingly.

"Although politicians claim that environmental law and trade law support each other, this ruling demonstrates that in the hands of the WTO, environmental law is in fact made subservient to trade laws," said Duncan Currie, international law expert and author of a Greenpeace assessment of the WTO case. Canada was the first industrialized country to ratify the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, which was first agreed to at the UN Earth Summit in 1992 and reaffirmed in 2002. The Convention includes the Biosafety Protocol, which regulates the movement of GMOs across borders.

"The ruling contradicts what heads of state agreed at the UN World Summit," said Currie.

The WTO ruled that the precautionary principle, a mainstay of international environmental law, was too controversial and unsettled a concept to be a general principle of law. The precautionary principle states that if the potential consequences of an action are severe or irreversible, in the absence of full scientific certainty, the burden of proof falls on those who would advocate taking the action.

"If taken as precedent," writes Canadian law firm McCarthy Tétrault, "this position could affect the regulation of many other industries." McCarthy Tétrault gives the example of the EC's draft rules for testing the effects of certain industrial chemicals for public health consequences. "If those rules incorporate the precautionary principle, any resulting restrictions could be challenged for not being based on hard scientific evidence."

"This ruling is important," says Howard Minigh, former vice-president of DuPont and current

Genetically Modified

Canada's International Biotech Agenda

by Yuill Herbert

Terminator seeds are genetically engineered to result in crops that **don't grow viable seeds.**

Farmers who use the Terminator seeds cannot save seeds from their crops and are forced to buy new seeds.

president of Brussels-based CropLife International, which represents biotech companies. "Regulations based on political expediency and excessive precaution encouraged by propaganda from anti-biotech groups" put producers of farm goods at a disadvantage, he says.

The Canadian government claims that its domestic GMO testing system is foolproof and that Canadian-approved GMO products are safe. A review of decisions by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency shows that all 61 applications for GMO animal-feed products were approved. Agriculture Canada has also approved 89 GMO food products for human consumption.

Are Canada's regulations for GMOs safe? GMOs are not labeled, and thus difficult to test, but according to Dr. Joe Cummins, "there has been a large increase in food allergy and food-related illness after the GM foods were spread around North American markets."

"In Canada," said Cummins, who is a member of the UK-based Independent Science Panel and an emeritus professor of genetics at the University of

Western Ontario, "most processed foods contain GM corn, soy or canola products."

"Even though it is not possible to do good science of the unlabelled foods, laboratory animal studies showed a range of adverse effects from allergy, inflammation or pre-cancerous lesion of the digestive system. Such studies are ignored by the Canadian government but they are well documented."

A 2004 report by the Polaris Institute looked at the 58 recommendations to protect public health by the Royal Society's 2001 Expert Panel on the Future of Food Biotechnology. The report found that while some progress has been made, there is still a great deal that needs to be done before Canadians have a precautionary regulatory system to protect their families and the environment from the risks of GMOs.

"It appears to me that the government has been unduly influenced by large biotech corporations and the regulatory norms in place south of the border," said Dr. Peter Andree, author of the Polaris report. "As a result, in general I think it is fair to say that Canadian regulators do not recognize the potential severity of the risks of products of biotechnology, or the value of a more precautionary response to those risks."

In the meantime, the Canadian government is campaigning to open the world market to GMOs, including the 'Terminator' gene. Terminator seeds are genetically engineered to result in crops that don't grow viable seeds. Farmers who use the Terminator seeds cannot save seeds from their crops and are forced to buy new seeds. There is a currently an international moratorium on the use and marketing of Terminator seeds.

"Terminator seeds are a weapon of mass destruction and an assault on our food sovereignty," said Viviana Figueroa of the Ocumazo indigenous community in Argentina on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity.

"Terminator [technology] directly threatens our life, our culture and our identity as indigenous peoples."

In 2005, a leaked report obtained by the ETC Group indicated that Canadian diplomats were heading to a Convention on Biodiversity meeting

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continued from previous page

with instruction to "block consensus" in order to help lift the moratorium.

The Canadian government was swamped with letters of protest from around the world and references to the Terminator were deleted in the official text after strong objections from other countries.

"This is a momentous day for the 1.4 billion poor people worldwide, who depend on farmer-saved seeds," Francisca Rodriguez of La Via Campesina, a global network of peasant farmers, said of the decision.

In spite of the international outcry, Pat Mooney of ETC Group noted that Canada continued to support Terminator technology at the last Biodiversity Convention meeting in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2006, but in a "low-key way."

"In the end," continues Mooney, "efforts by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA were blocked by the EU and developing countries and the Convention on Biodiversity ultimately strengthened its moratorium against Terminator."

"We nevertheless have the impression that Canada will continue to push for Terminator both in trees and crops."

Canada is also using its international aid program to spread biotech.

Through the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada is developing a biosciences centre for East and Central Africa, as one of four "agricultural centres of excellence" being developed around Africa, with an estimated cost of over \$30 million. The United States is expected to build a centre in North Africa; the UK will build one in South Africa, and France; one in West Africa.

"It is clear from the information we have gathered," said Mooney, "that BECA is being built to promote agricultural biotechnology."

The WTO decision will open up new markets for Canadian biotech, an industry with annual revenues of \$5 billion and an annual research expenditure of \$3 billion. www.dominionpaper.com



Mr. & Mrs. Video Courier Carriers

by Jan Simon

Mr. Video is located on Cleak St. just behind McDonalds and Pizza Delight. It is a very interesting establishment with lots of hidden assets. Also very interesting is Eileen Sutherland the owner of Mr. Video.

Eileen and her husband Wayne first started their business 21 years ago in a small shop that is now home to WestWind.

The Video/DVD is of course the obvious, but there are other fabulous items and services here for you to discover. Of course there is the previously viewed section, for those that like to own at affordable prices, but did you know that Mr. Video offers complete wedding services, from invitations to catering to fantastic, creative balloon decorating. I looked at some pictures of events which Eileen has done and was amazed at the creative genius

that is hidden in this small shop. Eileen and Wayne create lifesize figures from balloons, rope twists with lighted balloons for both indoor and outdoor weddings and other special events. They have helium balloons for all occasions as well as party supplies for all special occasions.

Part of their daily stock is popcorn, snacks of all types, pop, Xmas decorations. They have recently introduced a "dollar" department to make special event decorating affordable. Everything is co-ordinated for such events as weddings, baby showers and significant birthday events.

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Getting ready for the

ice

By Steve Galea



With deer season behind us and turkey and trout too far ahead to get excited about, all my thoughts have turned to getting ready for the ice fishing season that's just around the corner.

Soon, I'll be checking the line on my tip-ups and spooling my reels with new line. I'll take inventory of my tackle box and replenish the time-tested favourites, so that I have at least two of each, and maybe buy a lure or two I haven't tried as yet. You never know when a new wonder lure will be developed, or when an old one that you've seen a million times, suddenly becomes your new secret weapon.

Every ice angler has his or her favourite lures. For what it's worth I've had great luck jigging with Williams spoons for lake trout. Must-have finishes for me are blue and nickel, red and nickel, hammered gold and nickel and hammered gold or silver. I've been told that black and silver, if you can find it, is a killer rainbow trout combo.

Also among my go-to lures are Little Cleos, particularly in blue and silver, red and silver, and fluorescent yellow with orange dots. While the Williams spoons flutter on the way down, the Cleos have the heft that allows you to easily keep in touch with them as they descend. Lake trout seem to love them.

Some very good anglers swear by white tube baits for lake trout. My success with them has been limited though. Then again, it's all about faith. The more faith you have, the longer you fish with the lure.

Generally, I give them a try when none of my old faithfuls are doing the job, so this is probably not a fair test. This year, I think I'll try them during a hot bite. The point is, the more you experiment, the wider your angler repertoire becomes.

I also keep a few jigging Rapala minnows, in blue and silver and perch finish. Though these catch fish, I have shied away from them of late because with all those hooks they also catch bottom a whole lot, and they are expensive – often double the price of a little Cleo. There's no question that they work though and I've have good luck with them, especially for rainbows in shallower water. Balanced with the right rod, you can feel every little nuance.

If you don't own or carry a power auger, I've

found that a four-inch manual auger is the next best thing when the ice gets thicker. Though I own at least two eight-inch augers, I now reserve them for earlier in the year when I'm dealing with ice under a foot in thickness. The four-inch model, with sharp blades, eats through the thickest ice, and, let's be honest, how many fish do you catch that need a bigger hole than that?

When it comes to line, I'm a believer in thin diameter, non-stretch lines, in as low poundage as I can get away with for the lake and species – generally six to eight pounds, often four. If you expect to catch lunkers or hard fighting fish like rainbows, go a little heavier.

The down side of any line other than monofilament though is that you need a knife, lighter, or clipper every time you want to tie on a new lure, since this stuff is hard on your teeth. And, it is expensive. Of course, you could use swivel snaps but I believe they take away from the action of the lure.

Believe it or not, many old school hard water anglers still don't own an ice rod and reel. All I can say is, they're missing out on a whole lot of fun.

These rods are improving, and the good ones are little works of art. Look for good, big line guides that won't get iced up.

When it comes to reels, go big. The little ones, that some recommend for these rods, generally don't have the drag to cut it and their small diameter spools induce horrible line memory with some monofilaments. You are better off with your full-sized spinning or bait-casting reel.

I won't say too much about ice safety, except that inexperienced ice anglers should try to tag along with experienced friends at least for the first few times. If you can't, test ice near shore to ensure that you are dealing with four inches or better. Yes, many anglers fish on less ice, but they're experienced at reading ice conditions and recognized the risks. Also stay away from creek inlets and outlets, ice that has formed over currents, or places where things like docks, beaver lodges, and trees break through. Make ice picks a part of your gear too. They just could save your life.

The hard water season is upon us my friends. Enjoy it, and be safe.

Courier
FYI

Small rural communities know this economic reality all too well. Many have deep traditional ties to the land and nature. When industries like mining, forestry, fisheries and farming take a turn for the worse, small towns that depend on them for their livelihood are left twisting in the wind. But in that very wind, a growing number of communities are finding the key to what may be a brighter, cleaner future: wind as an endless environmentally-friendly power and revenue-generating source.

Necessity is indeed the mother of invention. Alberta's Pincher Creek, population 4,000, and PEI's Tignish, population 1,000, may be small towns, but now they are also becoming known as smart communities. Every year since 2003, throngs of tourists have been lining up at their doorstep to view the majestic turbines that soar 80 metres into the sky to capture the wind and whirl it into a hot commodity. Proof positive that if you build it, they will come.

In Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia too, many more communities are now beginning to tap into one of Canada's truly bountiful resources, wind, and reaping the benefits of harnessing a clean and renewable power source. Wind farms not only produce electricity, they generate significant economic benefits to the host community.

Two new case studies just released by the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) confirm it. Wind energy is helping to boost the economy of rural communities through local investments, job creation, land lease fees, new local tax revenues and tourism income.

No matter how far back we go in time, we humans have relied on wind. Many things may change in this fast-paced world of ours, but wind is destined to be with us always, now more so than ever as an answer to the quest for a greener world. CNW

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This photo was taken by Jerry Grozelle in March of 2006. The location is Miner's Bay on Gull lake. Anglers were getting in the last few days before the ice huts had to be removed for the season. Remember: Be ice aware this season!

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Born and raised in the Toronto area, Jan Simon moved to Wilberforce on Christmas Eve of 1994. Jan's background is in Purchasing, Marketing and Retail. Since 1980 she has worked in the jewellery industry for several manufacturers of fine jewellery, precious metals sales where she got to know many of the fine craftspeople around the Toronto area.

In 1997 she opened her own business in Wilberforce, the Dreamweaver Country Boutique. Here she makes, displays and sells her own work and supports local craftspeople by giving them a venue for their work.

Jan has one daughter, Lisa, who is married with two beautiful little boys soon to be seven and three years of age. Since losing Jim, the love of her life, seven years ago, the boys have been the light of her life. Can't wait until March break to have them visit again.

Jan started working with the Highlands Courier when it was still owned by Stewart and Ann Smith. She got involved because she saw how hard they worked on their paper despite many difficulties. She stayed on with the paper after Andrea Hillo bought it as she knew Andrea and her family and enjoyed the adventure of it all.

Today she very involved with the paper, selling advertising, writing articles and at her age, even has a paper route. Jan very much enjoys being out and about meeting people and the Highlands Courier has made that possible in spades.

Jan loves the life in Wilberforce and is active in many organizations - The Ladies Auxiliary of Branch 624, the Algonquin Gateway Business Association and the Highlands East Arts & Crafts Tour Group. She is also recently worked for Statistics Canada.

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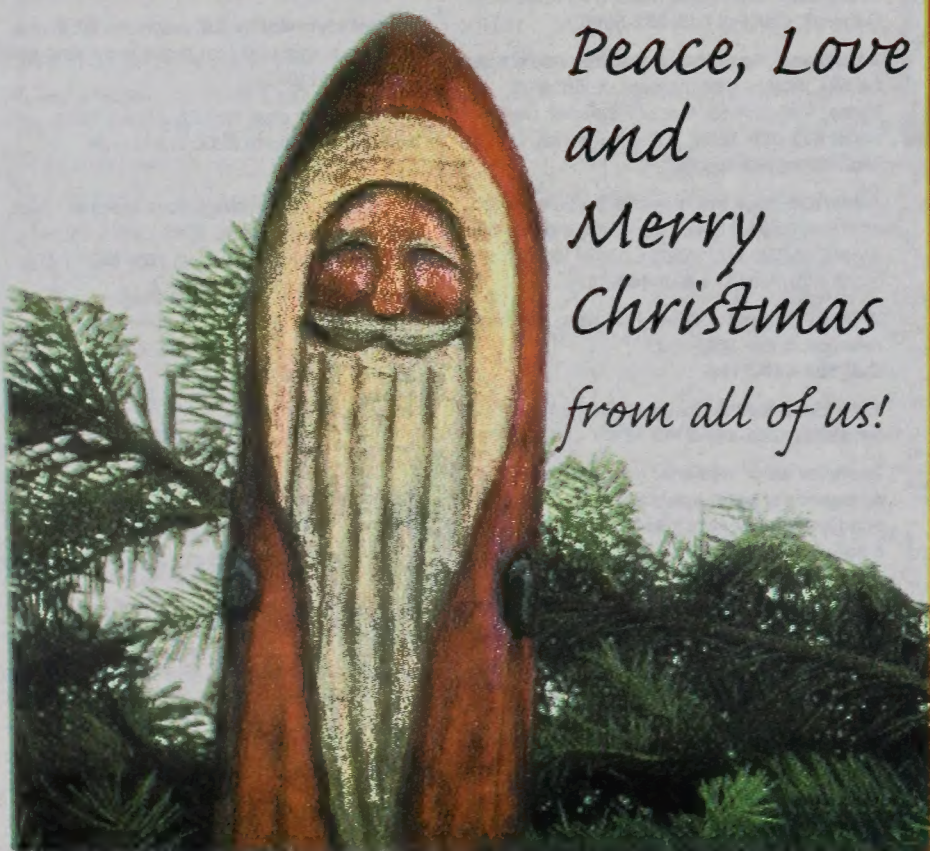
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